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High drama in Tour's opening act

Three days into the Tour de France and we've already had enough drama to fill our pages several times over. Foul weather, crashes, a neutralisation and an uphill finish were all crammed into the two days that followed the opening TT, which itself threw up a surprise result.

Chris Froome pulling on the yellow jersey at the top of the Mur de Huy on day three will have many race fans dreading a Team Sky controlled procession to Paris. But there's little to worry about — Tinkoff, Astana and Movistar will already be planning how to attack the men in black.

Froome's lead over Vincenzo Nibali and Nairo Quintana could have been far bigger had the BMC riders that made the lead group on stage two put their noses in the wind and do some work. Of the teams with an interest in the GC, the Swiss team had the numerical advantage in that lead group, but instead of driving on they left the bulk of the work to the others around them and in doing so threw away somewhere in the region of 60 seconds.

They may use the excuse of having Rohan Dennis behind in the yellow jersey, but those negative tactics may yet cost Tejay van Garderen a place on

the podium in Paris when Dennis's ride is a distant memory.

Simon Richardson,
acting editor



Photos: Press Association

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The Grand Départ
goes Dutch for 2015

Tour de France

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Froome off to a fine start

Strong finish on third stage puts Sky leader in yellow

Hugh Gladstone in Huy

Britain's Chris Froome got his Tour de France campaign off to a near perfect start when he found himself in the yellow jersey after just three days of racing. The 30-year-old Sky rider took the lead after finishing second behind Joaquim Rodríguez (Katusha) on Monday's third stage finish atop the Mur de Huy in the Belgian Ardennes.

This had followed a modest time trial performance on the opening stage on Saturday and Froome making the front echelon on a decisive second stage around the windswept delta of the south-west Netherlands on Sunday.

"I'm just really happy to be in the yellow jersey at this point," said the 2013 Tour winner after reacquainting himself with the garment. "It was very unexpected. I was hoping to be up there today but I'm really happy to have come second and put more time into all my GC rivals."

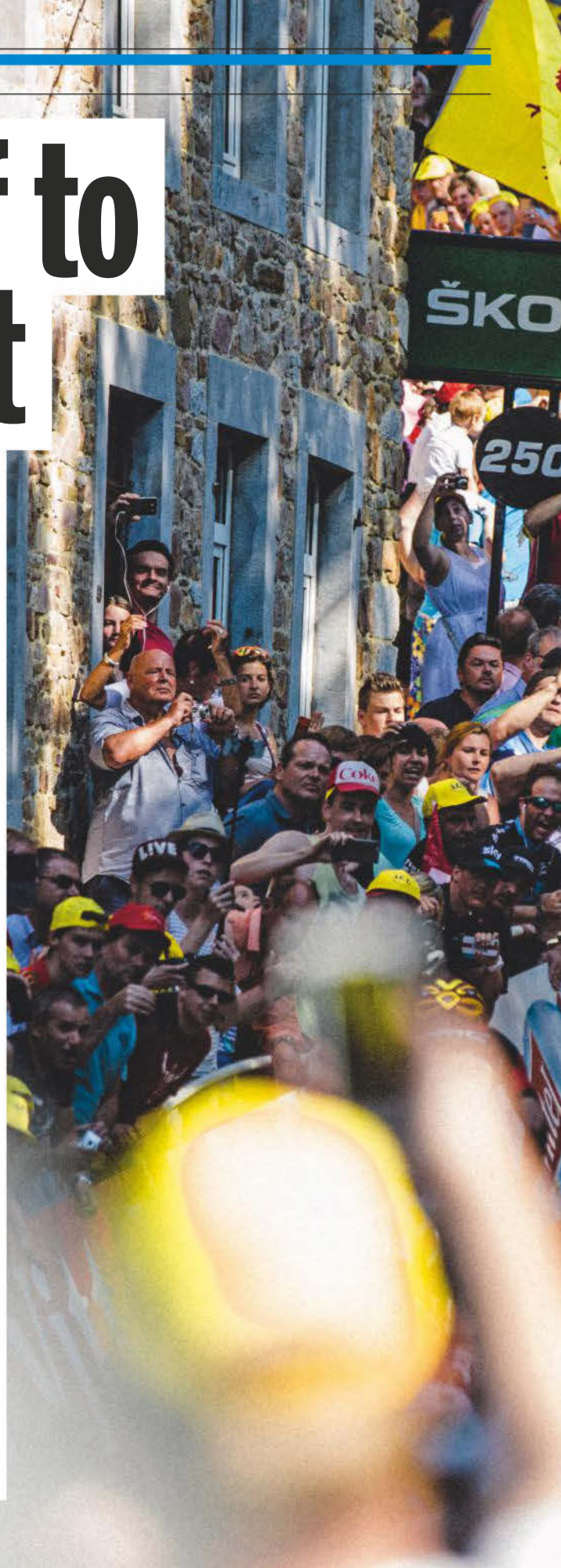
As the race moved from the terrain of the Ardennes Classics onto that of Paris-Roubaix on Tuesday, Froome commanded a single second margin over Etixx-Quick Step's Tony Martin.

While Froome suggested it would be difficult and possibly burdensome for his team to hang onto the jersey for another week of nervous, erratic racing before the Tour hits the Pyrenees, he declared, "I'd rather be in this position than having to try and make up time on my other rivals."

Froome had taken the jersey on Monday from the shoulders of Trek's Fabian Cancellara, who himself had nabbed it 24 hours earlier courtesy of a time bonus on the second stage to Zeeland. It turned out to be the shortest of the seven spells Cancellara has spent in the Tour's yellow jersey after a back injury sustained in a mass pile-up on the road to Huy ruled him out of any attempt to defend it on the iconic 1km finishing climb made famous by Flèche Wallonne. He later abandoned (see separate story).

Although Froome was buoyed by his performance on an ascent that "typically suits the more punchy kind of climber" he said he could not read too much into his rivals' form from the gains and losses of the Tour's early stages.

"We've just got to try and race the best we can until we get to the mountains," he said. "Then we take it from there."



Broken Cancellara out of the Tour

Fabian Cancellara was out of the Tour de France less than 24 hours after pulling on the yellow jersey after he sustained two fractured vertebrae in his lower back following a huge crash on stage three.

It was the 29th day that the Swiss rider had spent in the yellow jersey, but any hopes of extending his stay in the race lead were brought to a halt by the mass crash 55km from the finish at the top of the Mur de Huy.

With over 20 riders involved, the race was brought to a halt by the organisers as all race medical staff were tending to the injured riders, leaving the peloton without support.

Cancellara managed to finish the stage 11 minutes 43 seconds down on stage winner Joaquim Rodríguez, but was forced to leave the race after a CT scan confirmed his injuries. It concludes a difficult few days for the rider, who missed out on his major target, the opening time trial, by six seconds.

It is the second time this season Cancellara has injured his back, after his crash at E3 Harelbeke in March saw him fracture two different vertebrae and miss the Spring Classics.

Simon Gerrans, Daryl Impey (both Orica-GreenEdge), William Bonnet (FDJ), Tom Dumoulin (Giant-Alpecin) and Dmitry Kozontchuk (Katusha) are also out of the race thanks to the crash.

MY VIEW...

Hugh Gladstone

Cycling Weekly news editor

Over the first two road stages of the Tour, Froome and his team-mates did a masterful job of staying out of trouble and seizing opportunities to make time. These gains may only be small and pitfalls can open at anytime, but after Monday's stage it was very much 'Advantage Froome'.



Cav misfires on first sprint stage

Etixx lead-out falters as team squander chance of win and yellow jersey

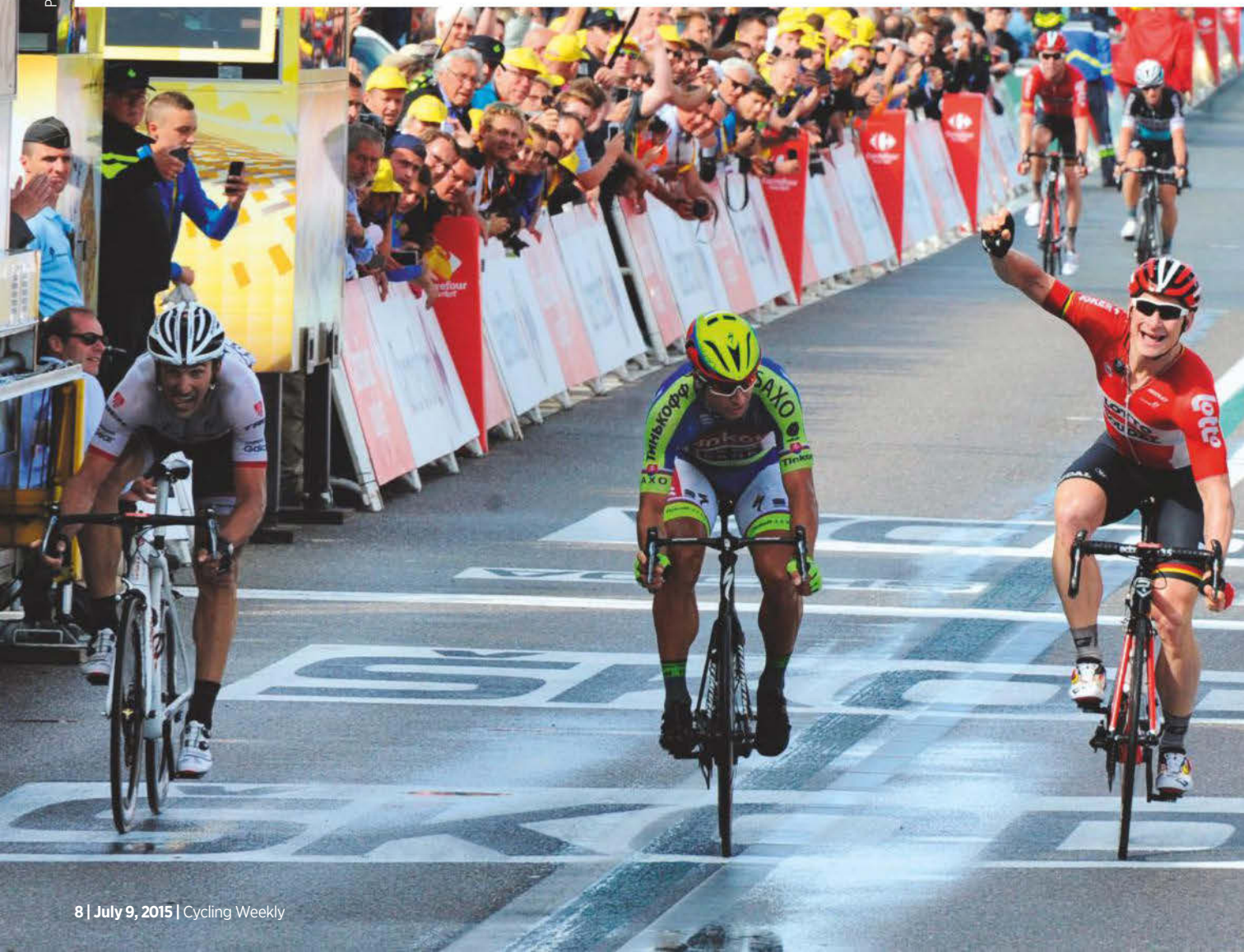
A miscalculation and a fierce sea breeze prevented Mark Cavendish from adding to his Tour de France stage tally at the first opportunity of the 2015 edition, in the Netherlands on Sunday.

The Manxman was looking for his

first stage win since the 13th stage of the 2013 race, a day when he and his Etixx-Quick Step team exploited the crosswinds in central France to decimate the peloton.

However, this time around the weather proved capricious and worked

against him; Etixx rode hard all day but Cavendish was left with too much work to do by his lead-out man Mark Renshaw approaching the long headwind finish on Neeltje Jans, a windswept man-made island tethered to the continent by enormous storm



surge barrages. Opening his sprint with 300m to go, Cav was pipped by stage winner André Greipel (Lotto-Soudal), Peter Sagan (Tinkoff-Saxo) and Fabian Cancellara (Trek Factory).

All four emerged from his wheel inside the final 150m and Swiss star Cancellara took the yellow jersey for his efforts.

Cavendish said: "With a headwind finish ideally I'd want to go with less than 200m to go, but I had to wind up off his [Renshaw's] wheel with more than 300m.

"I knew it was a gamble, having a go, but I just went. The guys behind me played it perfectly. I reckon I could get a job as a lead-out man."

"It's a mistake," admitted Renshaw. "We've won a lot together but it's a bitter pill to swallow when we messed up like that."

Cavendish also missed out on the

chance to put his team-mate Tony Martin in the yellow jersey. The German was second overall going into the stage and had Cavendish finished third (and forced Cancellara into fourth), he would have taken the race lead.

Cavendish later dismissed suggestions that he had sat up too early and given away third place too easily. However, the Etixx top brass were dismayed after watching their perfect plans turn to

ruin. Etixx directeur sportif Brian Holm called his team's last 500m "a historical f*** up".

"Unfortunately, we were the most hard-working team and we ended up with empty hands," added team manager Patrick Lefevere. "It [Cavendish's sprint] was too early and Greipel and Sagan were more fresh than Mark. I think he should be disappointed."

MY VIEW...

Richard Abraham

Cycling Weekly news writer

Cavendish was stuck in a winless situation: sprint long and risk leading out his rivals, or jump on their wheels and risk losing his momentum. He and Etixx can take some positives though. Cav showed good speed and on another day, with the right lead-out, he would have won that stage.



Dennis smashes Boardman record

Aussie takes Tour de France opening TT

Hugh Gladstone in Utrecht

This time last year Rohan Dennis was not at the Tour de France. Instead the 25-year-old from Adelaide was involved in the negotiation of a deal that would see him make a rare mid-season move from one WorldTour team to another.

On Saturday the Australian showed again how joining BMC has boosted his career, when he blasted to the Tour de France's fastest-ever individual time trial victory — 55.446kph — in the opening stage in Utrecht, beating Chris Boardman's 1994 record.

"It's definitely the high of my career," said Dennis. "To get the yellow jersey, it's a dream. I always wished to be in this position. Now I am."

Dennis has been touted for great things since he joined the Garmin set-up at the beginning of 2013. Compared favourably to fellow track-man Bradley Wiggins, he quickly set about showing his potential with a series of promising results.

However, after shifting to BMC last August, he has stepped up another level. He helped the Swiss squad to World Championship team time trial success last September and this year has won the Tour Down Under and held the Hour record.

"He's always had the skills to do what he did, but not the experience," noted BMC manager Jim Ochowicz, who had taken an interest in Dennis because of his ability in prologues and short time trials. "We needed someone to start these races on the right foot, so he was one of those guys on our radar."

Ochowicz acknowledged that the team of coaches, personal trainers and nutritionists that BMC employ have played a key role in Dennis's improvement. But there is also a suggestion, that in changing teams mid-season, Dennis — who has sometimes been portrayed as a difficult character and considered quitting the sport after a freak crash early last year — has been invigorated by the fresh start.

"Changes between teams happen all the time; just in this case it happened mid-season," said Charly Wegelius, a former sports director of Dennis at Garmin. "If all parties involved are in agreement, then I don't think it would be unhealthy for cycling in general if changes like this happened more often."

"Rohan is certainly riding well now," added Wegelius, "But I think he's just continuing the progression he started with us."

The question now is just how far could that progression go?





Weekly column **Rob Hayles**



“We had 10 British riders signing on and this is proof, if we needed it, that we are a nation to be reckoned with”

For anyone interested in cycling, their eyes this month will be firmly fixed on the Tour de France. Whether you follow it on TV, radio, Twitter, the web or printed media, it's perhaps all too easy to take it for granted.

None of this coverage, however, would be possible without the colossal entourage that travels with the race. This is the biggest annual sporting event on the globe, and to see it face to face is mind-blowing. The fact that this all moves from location to location on a daily basis makes it even more of a feat of human perseverance.

On this year's Tour there are 4,500 accredited workers. To carry them around takes many cars, trucks and motorbikes. The publicity caravan alone includes 600 staff with 154 vehicles, and will be throwing an estimated 14 million objects onto the roadside for the awaiting public.

Cycling superpower

On top of all this, there are all the team, media and organisational vehicles to add to the mix. Then there are the fans, who come in their tens of thousands to each stage, meaning that July is a very busy time in France wherever this great sporting event goes.

By the time this magazine comes out the race will be heading for Le Havre and us Brits will be crossing the Channel in droves to come and witness some of the action, hoping no doubt to witness a potential British victory. At the Tour start in Utrecht we had 10 riders signing on and this is proof, if we needed it, that we are a nation to be reckoned with when we get to French shores.

That reminds me of something I saw when I made my own journey out here to France last week: someone carrying a British-made baguette off the Eurostar in Paris.

Now I know we're good at beating the French at their own game... but we're not that good.

Former double world track champion, Rob Hayles is a pundit for TV and radio. He's also a coffee connoisseur and garden shed inventor



Spotlight on Astana as Tour kicks off

Team ignores MPCC rules and passes Lars Boom to race, after rider returns low cortisol levels

Comment by Richard Abraham

The 2015 Tour de France hadn't even turned a pedal in anger before a doping scandal threatened to overshadow the race. The Tour let out a collective groan when news erupted late on the eve of the race that Astana's Lars Boom had returned low cortisol levels in a pre-Tour blood test.

According to UCI rules Boom had done nothing wrong but according to the Movement for Credible Cycling (MPCC), the voluntary anti-doping organisation of which Astana used to be a member, Boom should have been rested for eight days on the grounds that racing could endanger his health.

Astana's doctors declared Boom healthy to race while the UCI did not accept a late rider substitution. Astana maintain they found out about Boom's levels after the deadline for changing riders, and the UCI understandably wasn't prepared to give special dispensation.

Really, it was a farce. How had the Tour again ended up with Alexandre Vinokourov defending his team's credibility and anti-doping position in a suburban chain hotel? Bizarrely, the team's press officer then ousted journalists from the

lobby, telling everyone with more than an ounce of condescension that they'd not been behaving well today and wouldn't be getting any pudding. Boom meanwhile went for the politician's trick of inviting his children and family along to the stage start in Utrecht and tried to act as if nothing had happened.

The cortisol level imposed by the MPCC is ostensibly about protecting a rider's health, but really this was an issue about doping. Low cortisol levels *can* come from using cortisone, a banned substance.

The MPCC now looks all but dead in the water. Astana were able to exploit their membership to make a case for having a strong anti-doping ethic, but jumped ship when push came to shove.

Vinokourov didn't even have the guts to withdraw from the organisation, leaving the MPCC to suspend his team. With Lampre-Merida, Bardiani-CSF and LottoNL-Jumbo all having left the organisation in the last 12 months, the MPCC arguably needs to reform or risk its own demise. The UCI meanwhile had no legal basis to bar Boom or Astana and was understandably unwilling to wade into a fiasco of uncertainty and bad press. Ultimately, cycling's anti-doping legislation has come up short again.

Live inside the peloton

Live broadcast onboard cameras made their debut on the opening road stage of the Tour de France in the Netherlands, filming the neutral zone of stage two through Utrecht city centre. LottoNL-Jumbo rider Tom Leezer had the clunky equipment (which consisted of a GoPro camera, transmission unit, battery pack and lethal looking aerial) fitted to his spare bike at the request of race organiser ASO. For safety reasons it wasn't allowed in the race; Leezer swapped to his race bike just before the flag dropped.

Porte's time at Sky could be up

Richie Porte admitted that he could leave Team Sky at the end of the season as he considers his options as a leader in the Grand Tours. The 30-year-old Australian's contract is up at the end of the season, and he could leave Sky in search of leadership opportunities, with Orica-GreenEdge and BMC possible destinations. World champion Michal Kwiatkowski also confirmed ahead of the Tour that he is weighing up his options following an offer from Team Sky, although the Pole added that he would prefer to remain at Etixx-Quick Step.

Twilight testing for anti-doping

Night-time anti-doping testing took place before the Tour de France according to UCI president Brian Cookson, as new UCI and World Anti-Doping Agency rules designed to stop micro-dosing come into force. "No team or rider can rest easy if they're using that window for micro-dosing," said Cookson. "There is a very strong possibility that they might get a knock on the door in the middle of the night." Sleeping with a clear conscience never felt better!

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HIDDEN JUNCTION BOX

Although the Venge ViAS has been designed to hide the Di2 junction box in the stem or bottom bracket, Etixx's mechanics have chosen to Velcro it under the saddle.



REAR BRAKE

Located on the seat tube just below the seatstay junction, the rear brake is designed to be aerodynamic without compromising braking power.



Aero trumps weight for Cav's Tour bike

Specialized focus on aerodynamics for the S-Works Venge ViAS

Few of the hundreds of pro bikes in Utrecht were receiving quite as much attention as Mark Cavendish's Specialized S-Works Venge ViAS.

This potentially game-changing bike is focused solely on aerodynamics rather than weight.

"We are completely committed to aerodynamics," said Specialized's

aerodynamicist Chris Yu. "Aero is typically 80 per cent of the resistance you face on a bike, and is far more important than weight, even on gradients up to five or six per cent."



INTEGRATED COCKPIT

Cav has ditched his usual Zipp set-up for Specialized's integrated cockpit, complete with an outfront mount for his Garmin Edge 810.

FRONT BRAKE

Specialized claims that the front brake manages to have a positive effect on aerodynamics, essentially acting as a fairing attached to top of the fork.



With this in mind, Cavendish's bike, featuring hidden brakes and an integrated cockpit, should be faster than his old set-up, despite weighing 7.4kg.

However, as you'd expect from Cav, there have been a few tweaks in order to meet the Manxman's exacting standards.

While the rest of the Etixx-Quick Step team are using FSA chainrings, Cavendish has adopted a 53/39 Shimano Dura-Ace chainset ever since dropping his chain in Milan-San Remo.

Extra aero touches include positioning the Di2 junction box above the saddle

rails, and using black tape to cover the holes in the quick-release levers.

Cavendish's bike is not painted in a custom green livery, as it was when he crashed out of the first stage in Harrogate 12 months ago. Will that change if Cav takes the green jersey?

Tech at the Tour

The Tour de France is a hotbed of new products and clever technology. Here is a selection of what we spotted in Utrecht



Chris Froome was running a stripped down Shimano Di2 climbing shifter with the casing removed, a set-up which Team Sky's leader prefers as it puts the buttons closer together.

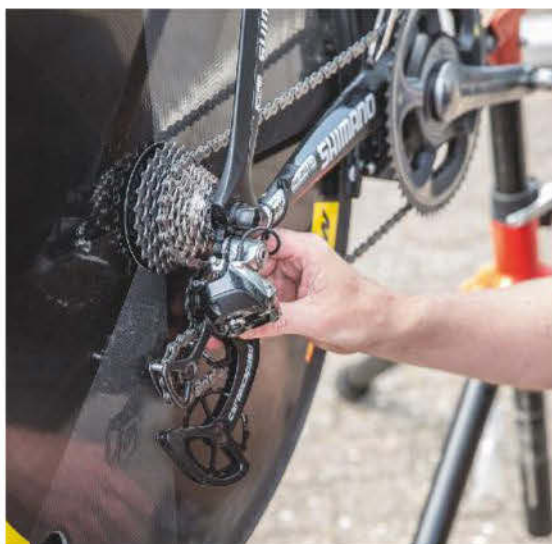
Joaquim Rodríguez also had an interesting Di2 set-up, with smaller sprint shifters located on the underside of the tops.



Plenty of riders were wearing the new Specialized S-Works road shoes, although the Tinkoff-Saxo riders stuck with the yellow version of the new model to match their kit.



IAM and BMC were using Giro's new stubby time trial helmet, which features a visor attached to the lids using a line of magnets.



Danish company CeramicSpeed was showing off its new derailleur cage, which claims to save 4-6 watts, although Katusha stuck with a standard Shimano cage for the opening time trial.



CeramicSpeed looks to be working with a number of teams, with IAM Cycling's bikes being kitted out with the company's low friction jockey wheels.

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LAST WEEK

Monday June 29

Cyclists staged a third 'die-in' protest in the space of six days in London in memory of the latest rider to die on the capital's roads. Ying Tao was killed in a collision with a lorry on June 22.

Tuesday June 30

A report commissioned by Sustrans claimed that the National Cycle Network has saved the UK economy £7bn since its introduction 20 years ago — because of the health benefits associated with riding bikes.

Wednesday July 1

The taxi driver responsible for the death of Olympic mountain biker Burry Stander was last week given a six-year sentence for culpable homicide. The South African was killed after being hit by Njabulo Nyawose's vehicle in Shelly Beach on January 3, 2013.

Thursday July 2

Victoria Pendleton placed eighth on her competitive horse racing debut in Newbury last Thursday. Pendleton, the two-time Olympic cycling champion, is aiming to compete at next year's Cheltenham Festival but admitted the race showed her that "there's plenty more hard work ahead".

Friday July 3

Scott Thwaites (Bora-Argon 18) sprinted to victory in the Skipton GP ahead of One Pro Cycling's Pete Williams and Tom Moses (JLT-Condor), after a race dominated by the trio.

Saturday July 4

A mistake by race commissaires resulted in Tinkoff-Saxo placing last in Saturday's team time trial that kicked off the Tour of Austria. Tinkoff DS Nicki Sorensen estimated the mistake cost his team at least 15 seconds.

Sunday July 5

Southeast's Mauro Finetto won the fifth edition of the Sibiu Tour, a Romanian stage race. With four of the five stages won by Italians, 2013 winner Davide Rebellin added to the domination by taking the second spot on the podium.



First-timer Bideau takes 100 record

Distance mark falls to Pendle Forest CC rider on debut, away from National Champs

Snowdon Sports

While the top riders were battling it out in the National 100-Mile Championships in Wales on Sunday, the national competition record over the distance was broken in North Yorkshire by Richard Bideau (Pendle Forest CC) on the same day.

The 44-year-old from Burnley in Lancashire, riding his first 100-mile event, sliced almost four minutes off the 12-year-old record held by Kevin Dawson.

He clocked 3:18.54 to win the Stockton Wheelers 100 by more than six minutes, an event held on the T1002 Crathorne to Dishforth course that is set to be used for the 2016 National Championship.

"It was totally unexpected — I am quite amazed," said Bideau, who had ridden to second spot in the Belper BC event the previous day with an impressive 47:57.

"About 50 miles in I started to realise

that I wasn't far off competition record pace, it was all a bit insane, and I kept thinking, 'Am I going to pay for this?'" added Bideau. "But it didn't happen and I even managed to raise my power a little bit towards the end.

"I kept saying to myself, 'Don't blow it now, you might not get the chance again.' I felt fine until I crossed the line and then I was in bits and I struggled to turn the cranks to get back to HQ."

Bideau is in only his second season of time trialling, but has spent several years riding mountain bikes.

Meanwhile, second spot in the Stockton Wheelers 100 went to Steve Irwin (North Lincs RC) — the man who convinced Bideau to switch from mtb to time trialling.

Charles Taylor (South Pennine RC) and recently crowned British time trial champion Hayley Simmonds (Team Velosport) took the National 100 titles in Abergavenny (see page 86).

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Brits Abroad

James Knox, 19 Zappi's Racing Team Chevio, Italy

Where are you? We're only 30 minutes from the hills, and the local races are often extremely hilly. That's the great thing about Italy.

How's the racing? Italy is more controlled than Portugal, France or Belgium. The break goes and the teams at the front pull them back in for the last lap or bunch sprint. Often it's best to conserve energy until the end, which suits me.

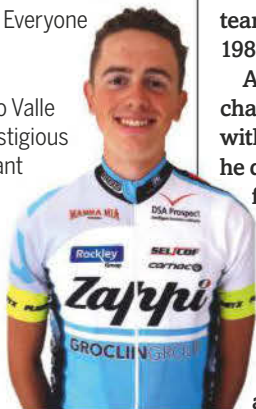
How's the form? I started the season well with a few top-10s in UCI races. Since then, others have got their season going, and I've found it hard to maintain the form and get the podium spot I was hoping for.

What have you learnt? That you can prepare all you want but it's no guarantee of success. Before, I'd get results when I expected them, but out here you have to be patient.

How's life? The beach is 50m away from the house, so we can have a swim and relax in the sun. But we're spending so much time on the bike that we don't notice too many cultural differences, apart from the way Italians drive. I couldn't be out here without the support I get from the Lewis Balyckyi Trust Fund.

Anything you miss? Sitting on the settee, as there's no TV lounge area in the house here. And my bed, too. Everyone misses their own bed.

What's next? The Giro Valle d'Aosta in July is a prestigious six-stage race that I want to do well in. I'm also hoping for selection at the Tour de l'Avenir and to go well at the Piccolo Giro di Lombardia this October again; I finished 14th last year.



Dan McLay of French squad Bretagne-Séché Environnement sprinted to the win in the 30th edition of the Otley Grand Prix in West Yorkshire last Wednesday evening, while Annasley Park (Giordana Triton) beat Dame Sarah Storey in a two-up sprint to claim the women's race.

Obituary: Tony Capper

Tony Capper, the larger than life businessman who took the first British team to the Tour de France, has died.

A former policeman who set up his own taxi and haulage firms, Capper made history when his ANC-Halfords team took part in the 1987 Tour.

An exuberant character, Capper was not without his critics; when he drove a team car away from the 1987 Tour with one week to go most of the team never saw him again.

"I didn't agree with all his methods but what he did was amazing," said Phil

Griffiths, former ANC-Halfords manager. "He taught me some basic principles and some words of wisdom that I've taken with me into business today.

"He was a great

visionary," Griffiths added. "From a solo taxi driver he became a master of franchises. He was a people's champion."

Capper passed away at Bristol Royal Infirmary on June 26, aged 73.



Capper with Joey McLoughlin at the 1985 Milk Race

Photos: Andy Jones, Graham Watson



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Six Day racing returns to UK

After a 35-year absence, the hustle and bustle of six-day racing is coming back to London

Nick Bull

Six Day London, the first event of its kind to take place in the capital in 35 years, was launched last Wednesday with organisers proclaiming it will become one of the highlights of the British sporting calendar.

Taking place at the Lee Valley Velodrome on October 18-23, its programme will comprise junior, women and sprint events, alongside much-loved six-day favourites such as the elimination, derny and Madison races. Mark Cavendish has signed up as a partner of organiser Madison Sports Group, but his participation in the six-day has yet to be confirmed.

Cycling Weekly spoke to Madison's CEO Mark Darbon to get the lowdown on the first event of its kind to take place in the capital since the Skol 6 at Wembley Arena in 1980.

Cycling Weekly: What's the thinking behind bringing six-day racing back to London?

Mark Darbon: We've been looking at the six-day proposition for a couple of years now. I think the extreme growth in cycling's popularity is the reason behind us going ahead and organising the event. There's a groundswell of support for cycling, and we believe this event deserves to be back in London, a city that has played a key role in six-day history.

CW: The six-day scene has struggled in recent years, and many long-standing sixes are no more. Can Six Day London be the start of the scene's rebirth?

MD: We wouldn't put on a six-day if we didn't believe they had a future. We think

there are opportunities to grow the six-day proposition. We have a three-year deal to deliver the event in London, and while I think it's too early to say about future UK events, as we see a future in six-day events I wouldn't write off other venues hosting a Six.

CW: Many six-days take place on tracks below the 250-metre Olympic standard. Will having this length track in London affect the racing?

MD: We're determined to create a great spectacle, and we'll tailor our programme to make sure that's the case. As [event ambassador] Sir Chris Hoy pointed out to me, the Berlin Six is one of the most popular and enjoyable to watch, and that's on a 250m track.

CW: Love them or hate them, beer-drinking fans in track centre are a defining feature of the long established six-days. Will this be the case in London?

MD: There will be hospitality packages for track centre access, which I believe are appropriately priced. We have to put our event on in line with venue regulations; for example, licensing rules in the UK are slightly different to those on the Continent, but we're confident we'll have a brilliant atmosphere. We've got a range of ticket prices that should appeal to everybody.

CW: You've said you want to transform the viewing experience for those watching in the velodrome and on television. Can you elaborate on that?

MD: First, we're close to announcing our broadcast proposition, and we fully expect there to be live coverage every evening. In sport, fans have high expectation levels of what they expect from both the live and TV experiences. So we want to ensure the velodrome looks and sounds completely unlike anything seen at other cycling events — think music, light shows and unique ways for fans to engage in the action. We also want to enhance the television experience to include telemetry data and on-board cameras.

CW: Which riders have already signed up to compete?

MD: WorldTour riders Michael Mørkøv and Alex Rasmussen, current world Madison champion Morgan Kneisky, and established six-day stars such as Yoei Havik and Marc Hester will compete. We'll announce more over the coming weeks.

■ Visit www.sixday.com for more information and to purchase tickets.





Appollonio tests positive for EPO

Former Team Sky and Ag2r La Mondiale rider Davide Appollonio faces a doping ban and a hefty fine after testing positive for EPO. The Italian sprinter failed an out-of-competition test on June 14, and has been provisionally suspended. However, the 26-year-old could receive a four-year ban and have to pay a €100,000 (£71,000) fine as part of a zero-tolerance, anti-doping stipulation written into his contract with the Androni-Sidermec team he has raced for in 2015.

Italian success for Clancy

Ed Clancy was the pick of Britain's men's endurance squad at last week's six-day Fiorenzuola Track Meeting in Italy. The double Olympic champion won the scratch race and placed second in the omnium behind Sky rider Elia Viviani. The event offered key qualification points for Rio 2016.

Leeds velodrome up for discussion

Could Leeds be the next British city to get an Olympic-standard velodrome? Local councillors will this week discuss the issue after such a facility was touted as part of Yorkshire's Grand Départ legacy. "It is pretty obvious that there is an enormous appetite for cycling in this area and I want to build on that," said Horsforth councillor Brian Cleasby, who put forward the idea.

Photo: Graham Watson

REMEMBER THE FINAL STAGE

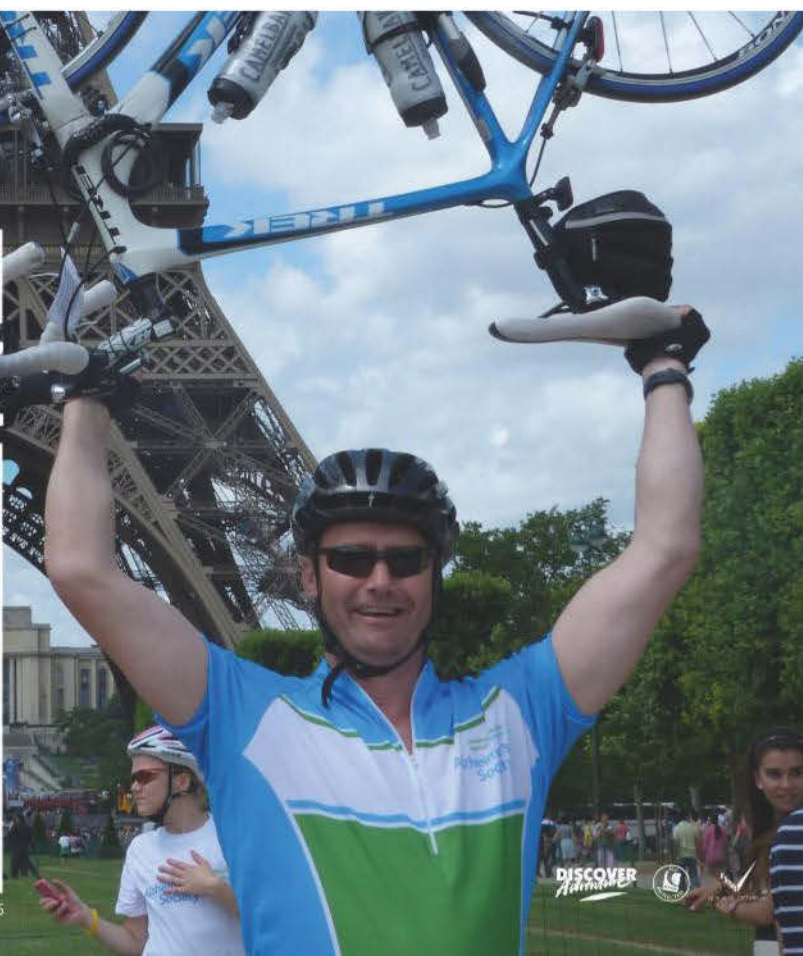
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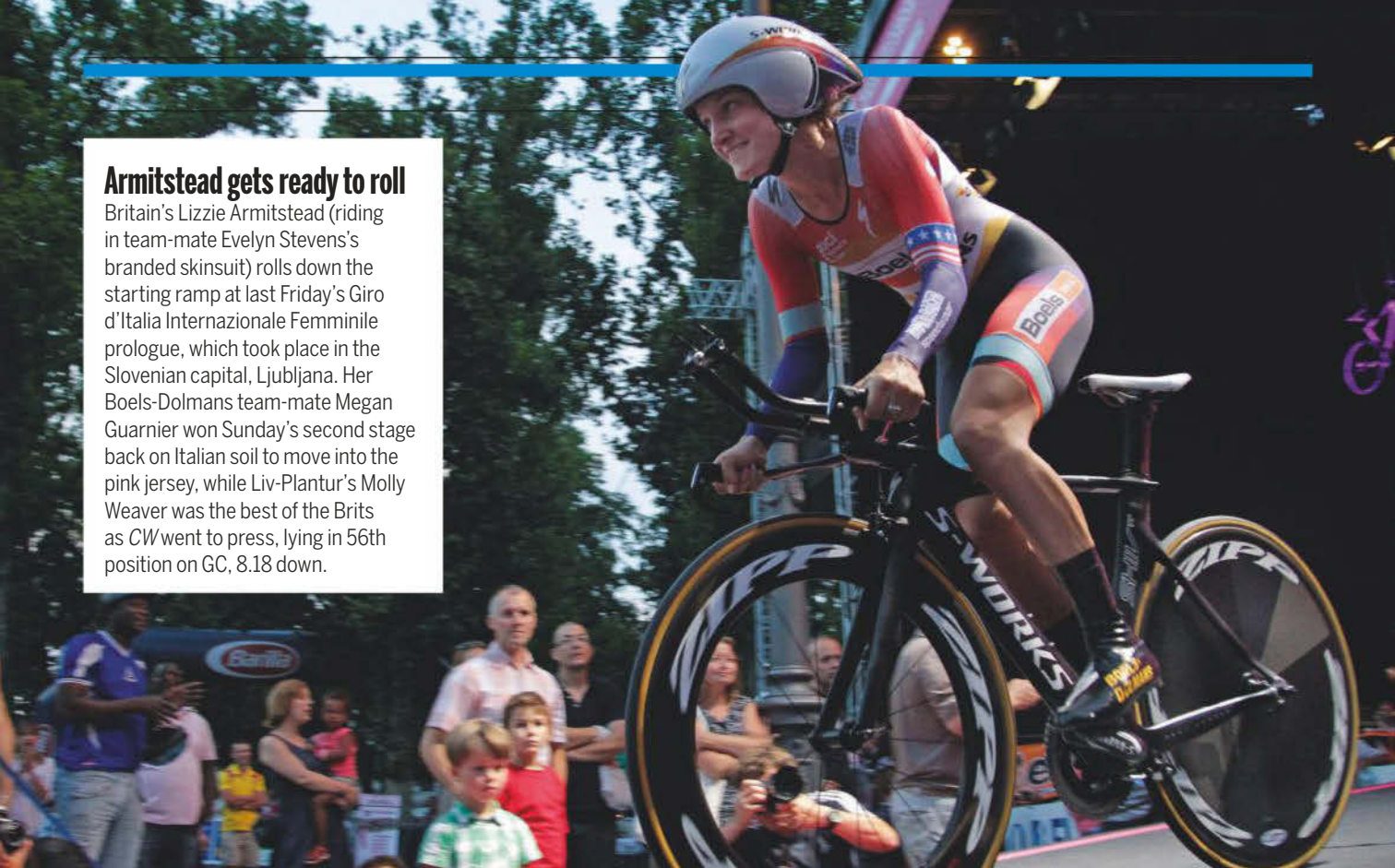
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Armitstead gets ready to roll

Britain's Lizzie Armitstead (riding in team-mate Evelyn Stevens's branded skinsuit) rolls down the starting ramp at last Friday's Giro d'Italia Internazionale Femminile prologue, which took place in the Slovenian capital, Ljubljana. Her Boels-Dolmans team-mate Megan Guarnier won Sunday's second stage back on Italian soil to move into the pink jersey, while Liv-Plantur's Molly Weaver was the best of the Brits as CW went to press, lying in 56th position on GC, 8.18 down.



Cav takes on IoM amateurs

Sprinter wins Isle of Man race a week before the Grand Départ

Nick Bull

Racing against GCSE students, highly rated youngsters and a 17-stone gym instructor — no other rider prepared for the Tour de France in the same way that Mark Cavendish did.

Cavendish tapered for the Tour on home soil in the Isle of Man, and most notably won a round of the 42-kilometre Bikestyle Handicap Road Race League around the parish of Jurby on June 25.

Local rider Conor Davies (Royal London 360) was one of a handful of riders in the scratch group with Cavendish. Aged 16, he finished his GCSE exams a week before the race, and placed sixth.

"I ride the series every week, but I'm not exactly used to riding with people like Cav," he said. "He was really encouraging — and he pulled us through the headwind sections, too!"

Among the early starters was 41-year-old Rich Cryer, the aforementioned gym instructor and self-confessed fan of weight training.

"Every week we're determined not to let the scratch group catch us, but most times they end up getting us just before the finish," he said. "This race was different; at the start of lap four I saw Cav was coming across."

Shadowing Cav

Seventeen-year-old Matt Bostock, a member of British Cycling's Olympic Development Programme, was following behind Cavendish and the pair attacked straight away.

"I tried following them," added Cryer. "I was pushing 1,450W at one point — I think the adrenaline masked the pain of trying to keep the speed! But Cav put his foot down after a few seconds, and I was dropped pretty quickly."

Upfront, Bostock was undeterred by the likelihood of being beaten by the former world champion to the win and gave his all to stay alongside the sprint ace as the finish line approached.

"I use races like this event more for training; the scratch group doesn't always make the catch, so I just put as much into them as I can to make it worthwhile," Bostock said.

"I kept on doing my turns; Cav would say 'good lad' when I went through. Then with about four kilometres to go, I was on the front and as I went to flick him through he attacked me.

"I was flat out when he went — he must have been doing 70kph. But I managed to limit my losses and hold on to second."

Cryer took fourth, 53 seconds down on Cavendish. "It was such a buzz after the race, talking to people about how crazy and exciting the race was," he added.

Sky ends BC partnership

Sky's sponsorship with British Cycling will end in 2016, leaving an estimated £2.5m hole in the governing body's annual budget. The Rupert Murdoch-owned company has partnered with BC since 2008, during which time home riders finished top of the cycling medal table at two successive Olympic Games. It is believed the multimedia giant will continue to fund the team that bears its name, and also Team Wiggins, for whom it is the major backer, into 2017.

Essex's Giro bid

Could the Giro d'Italia be heading to Essex? The county council's Active Essex department, tasked with bringing Olympic events to the county as part of its London 2012 legacy, confirmed last week that negotiations were under way with Giro organiser RCS to stage the event's *Grande Partenza* there. Although no time frame was given, the bid could rival that of Stockholm's rumoured ambition to welcome the event in 2017.



Blythe to defend RideLondon title

Defending champion Adam Blythe (Orica-GreenEdge) was confirmed for next month's Prudential RideLondon-Surrey Classic (August 2), with Lotto-Soudal's André Greipel also named among the race's provisional starters. Tour de France prologue winner Rohan Dennis and Mark Cavendish are also scheduled to compete in the event, the start of which this year will move to Horse Guards Parade.

Photos: Andy Jones



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Belgian racing comes to Staffordshire

Shugborough Estate plays host to kermesse, won by Gabriel Cullaigh

Daniel Ostanek

What is a kermesse? A road race, a criterium, or something completely different? More common on the continent, the Staffordshire Cycling Festival has bucked the UK trend for road races and organised a kermesse around Shugborough Estate for the

past two years. But how exactly does it differ from other events?

"It's in-between a proper road race and a criterium," said Raleigh-GAC's Morgan Kneisky, who was runner-up on the night.

"I would say it's a bit like a big criterium, always fast and very hard."

The length is certainly a big factor in setting a kermesse apart from crits.

While both forms of racing are lap-based, the circuits in kermesses are longer than what you see in a criterium, while the overall length is longer too. The Staffordshire race consisted of 15 laps of a 6.4km undulating circuit, resulting in an hour and three quarters of racing covering 96km.

Due to a decreased length, criteriums also tend to be more intense affairs,



as riders race on the limit for around an hour. “Kermesses aren’t quite as full-on,” said Mark Christian of Team Wiggins. “They’re a bit longer so the pace does settle down mid-race, like it did tonight.

“With a criterium it’s often flat out from start to finish, going from corner to corner, just accelerating out of each one,” he continued.

If there’s a difference in the feel of the racing, there’s also a difference in the

set-up of the courses. A top 10 finisher on the night, Dale Appleby of NFTO said: “I’d say they’re more like a road race that happens to be on a circuit, because the courses are less technical than criteriums.”

Nineteen-year-old British Cycling Olympic Academy Programme rider Gabriel Cullaigh (100% ME) took a solo victory in the event after escaping on the final lap, while Kneisky won the bunch sprint for second place. The

latter’s team-mate Steve Lampier keeps the overall lead of the Elite Road Series after placing fourth.

One Pro Cycling’s Jon Mould finished third, having won the festival’s other elite men’s race, Friday night’s Stafford Grand Prix, to take the overall lead of the Elite Circuit Series.

Nikki Juniper (Giordana-Triton) won the women’s event at Shugborough to seal the British Cycling Women’s Road Series title with one round remaining.

To do this week...

Ride

Yorkshire 101: Grand Reserve Special Edition, July 11

Another event commemorating the Tour de France's visit to Yorkshire last year, this 101-mile ride takes in parts of the course used on the race's opening stage between Leeds and Harrogate. Its Open Wheel food station will take on a continental flavour for the event, serving moules marinières and strong coffee, with part of the entry fee going to local charities. £36 www.theopenwheel.com



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Stockton Cycling Festival, Stockton-on-Tees, July 10-12

Featuring a Friday night criterium, Saturday sportive and Sunday's round of the Elite Road Series, the Stockton GP, the fifth running of the popular cycling festival will feature lots of free family-friendly activities and attractions. po.st/StocktonFestival

Watch

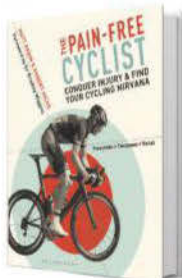
On Yer Bike: A History of Cycling on Film

A collection of short films about cycling in the UK between 1899 and 1983, this delightful DVD includes adverts, dramas, newsreels and public information films that have been dug out from the British Film Institute archives. Our personal favourite is 1914's *Fat Man on a Bicycle*. RRP £22.99. shop.bfi.org.uk

Read

The Pain-Free Cyclist

With a foreword by Sir Bradley Wiggins, and testimonies from some of the sport's biggest names, *The Pain-Free Cyclist* is an informative yet easily digestible guide to the common injuries riders can pick up, and how they are best treated. Dr Matt Rabin, the book's co-author, is currently working on the Tour de France with the Cannondale-Garmin squad. RRP £16.99. www.bloomsbury.com



Guest column

Colin Sturgess



“The race kicked off very early — after only eight kilometres the echelons started. It was carnage”

It's been a busy couple of weeks since I last wrote — first the three-day Eroica Britannia festival in Bakewell, and then the National Championships in Lincoln. Two brilliantly diverse and different celebrations of cycling: the former a study in all things classic and vintage, the latter a mix of cutting-edge technology and pure racing.

Having won the National Champs road race 25 years ago, I straddle the two camps quite nicely! The bike I won on would be considered a classic now, but was cutting-edge back then: a steel Columbus TSX Harry Quinn with a Campagnolo C-Record groupset and 32-hole Mavic SSC wheels, shod with the ubiquitous Vittoria CXs. It would fit right in at the Eroica, but I dare say I'd struggle to get it up Lincoln's infamous Michaelgate climb numerous times as per this year's championships! However, I did make the cobbled ascent eight times this year... just not on the bike as I'd wished, but rather as DS in the Sportgrub-Kuota team car.

There was precious little a small domestic team such as ours could do against the might of Sky, One Pro Cycling, Madison-Genesis and NFTO except to survive, duck and dive, and get around the gruelling 197-kilometre course. It sounds harsh and defeatist, but it's certainly not meant that way; it's a simple reality and in no way disrespectful to my team. As it happens, the race kicked off very early and after only eight kilometres the echelons started. It was carnage.

We lost a couple of lads early, including Adam Kenway (who crashed, and ended up covered head-to-toe in Lincolnshire mud). We placed young Ollie Maxwell in the break, but to no avail. The race settled down and our leading rider was T1 bronze medallist Ryan Perry, who was in a group riding for 21st place, everyone else having been black-flagged [for being too far behind the leaders]. Eight times up the brutal cobbled gradient took its toll and the group finished about 13 minutes down on a worthy winner in Pete Kennaugh. So although I didn't get to ride 25 years after winning, I experienced the amazing crowds and atmosphere throughout Lincoln. I can only imagine the emotion Kennaugh and Cav felt launching their winning bids through wall-to-wall spectators! Wear that jersey with renewed pride, Pete — it's well deserved!

Former individual pursuit world champion and erstwhile 10 record holder Colin Sturgess is DS for domestic team Sportgrub-Kuota



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THE BIG QUESTION

What's the most embarrassing thing you've done while cycling?

Wore my bibshorts inside out on a long commute to work. Looked like an extra from a Cameo video.

Ian Brazier

A local caught me singing and dancing to ABBA while cycling on what I thought was an empty road. Note to self: don't get carried away with a good playlist while enjoying a good cycle.

Bethan Credicott

End of my first club run, coming into town, I had dropped to the back after a long pull at the front. Got gapped slightly as we went round a bend and a pedestrian stepped out in front of me. Tried to avoid them, bike went from under me and slid through a crowd of pedestrians knocking over a policeman and coming to rest against a coffee shop window. As I stood up I realised that the slide had removed a lot of my shorts and all the Sunday shoppers in the coffee shop were given a free show of a semi-bare-arsed cyclist being spoken to by a copper!

Graham Ide

Asked a man "All right? Do you need a hand?" as he'd stopped at the roadside. Got round the corner before I realised he'd stopped for a wee. Just glad he didn't take me up on the offer.

Claire Rabbitt

Cycled past a wake. Dressed in a Northwave skeleton top.

Matthew Cann

Leaving a bike shop having just had SPDs fitted and new cycling shoes. I was so chuffed with the new kit that I didn't realise that my helmet was on back to front.

Laertes Godwin

Riding a canal towpath in the Midlands, I wanted to impress my mates with a



'dismount while moving'. I hopped off my bike, missed the grass verge, and did a nice feet-first dive into the canal up to my waist, still holding the bike.

Christopher Clarke

I was caught taking a natural break by the police in the middle of nowhere!

Bri Murray

Triathlon.

John Friend

Spent 10 kilometres wondering why pedalling with my new chain was such hard work. I hadn't threaded it through

the derailleur properly and it had been running over a metal guide.

David Williams

Forgetting I was on my mountain bike and reaching for the drops. You can imagine the rest.

Caroline Brown

Next week's big question...

When and how did you learn to ride a bike?

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Letters

Letter of the week
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STAR
LETTER

That's me in the corner

My husband bought *Cycling Weekly*, which is not unusual at this time of year, with the Tour de France starting. This time, though, he turned to a page showing some archive photos from the Tour in 1965 (CW June 25).

Vin Denson — I could faintly remember his name. "Look to the left, can you see anyone you recognise?" At the far left, at the front behind the rail, is my then boyfriend, now husband, and the faint dot of a figure behind his left shoulder is me.

We had flown to Paris to see the final stage of that year's Tour. My husband, then boyfriend, wanted Vin Denson's cap, which Denson duly gave him.

Julia Rutter, email

Vin win

Thank you for the 'Brits at the 1965 Tour' (CW June 25) — it's so good to see Vin Denson alongside his friends Tom Simpson and Michael Wright.

Vin is still going strong; although he stopped cycling a couple of years ago, he still attends the annual Hammersmith Cyclists Film Show to regale us with his stories.

He was the first Brit to win a stage of the Giro, and he was the first 'super domestique' for Rik van Looy and then Jacques Anquetil before coming home to resume life as a club rider.

Above all, he is self-effacing and modest about his achievements. I'm sure he will be

enjoying this year's Tour de France as he always does.

Bob Davis, email

Velothon at-tack

I would like to say a massive congratulations to everybody involved in organising the Velothon Wales. I enjoyed the event as a competitor, and it was also enjoyed by my family as spectators. There was a huge amount of vocal support from local residents who created an absolute buzz for those taking part.

My only disappointment is the stupidity of certain individuals who put tacks on the route. I was lucky: I was warned and was able, like many, to carry my bike through. Unfortunately there were many who were not so lucky and I saw many people who were injured.

I don't understand why people would do this. It's getting more and more common, and it's only a matter of time before there is a fatality.

For me, I had a huge amount of fun while challenging myself mentally and physically. I am not going to let one stupid individual stop me.

Colin Nye, email

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Armstrong media hype

The only reason Lance Armstrong remains in the headlines is because of the attention paid by the media.

Cycling has to move on from the negative effect of Armstrong and the years during which he dominated the sport.

Jim Kirkwood, email

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Johnny Helms was *Cycling Weekly's* resident cartoonist from February 1946 until November 2009.

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Tour de France

Eighteen pages packed with insight, images and action from the first three stages of the world's biggest bike race



Dutch drama



Action-packed opening weekend starts to shape the GC

Chaotic. Nervous. Tense. Messy. Riders have used all sorts of words to describe the opening week of this year's Tour de France but regardless of terminology, the first few days of the 2015 race have undoubtedly been as high on drama as any in recent memory.

What was billed as a 'classic' opening week had, at the time of going to press, certainly delivered on action. Record speeds in the opening time trial were followed by crosswinds and splits on stage two to Zeeland, high-speed crashes on stage three and one of the big four GC favourites catapulting himself into the yellow jersey on the 20 per cent gradients of the Mur de Huy. And all this before we even get to the cobbles.

"For the spectators it's got to be one of the most fascinating Tour de France starts, we've got all the favourites fighting it out, day in day out," said Team Sky's Pete

Kennaugh. "I'm already wrecked after three days, so I don't know how I'm going to finish!"

The teams of Sky, Astana, Tinkoff-Saxo and Movistar raced the opening few days with breathtaking intensity, battling tooth and nail to keep their leaders out of trouble. "When it started

raining you could hardly see where you were going," said Sky's Geraint Thomas after stage two. "It's hard enough fighting for position."

It was perhaps inevitable that a crash would occur, but the high-speed pile-up caused when FDJ's William Bonnet came down on stage three was so severe that

Fab's final French fling?

It wasn't quite right when Fabian Cancellara *didn't* win the opening time trial of the 2015 Tour de France; the 34-year-old Swiss rider had won every first-day time trial stretching back eight years (in 2012, 2010, 2009 and 2007). However the Trek rider soon made amends when he took yellow from Rohan Dennis at the end of stage two to Neeltje Jans, in doing so becoming the rider to have worn the yellow for the most days without actually winning the Tour. Cancellara now has 29 yellow jerseys in his collection: two from 2004, seven from 2007, six from 2009 and 2010, seven from 2012, and one from 2015. This year's yellow

jersey could indeed be his last; Cancellara withdrew from what could be his final Tour after crashing on stage three.

Hard as Hansen

Adam Hansen was determined not to let a dislocated shoulder get in the way of him completing his 12th consecutive Grand Tour following a crash on the second stage of the Tour de France in the Netherlands. The Australian, who has completed every three-week race since finishing the 2011 Vuelta a España, was admitted to hospital on Sunday evening but started the following stage in Antwerp. "I eat pain for breakfast!" he wrote on Twitter.



Stage three theatrics: carnage en route to the Mur de Huy

race organisers took the decision to temporarily neutralise the stage. Once the dust had settled it emerged this was because every race medical vehicle was occupied with the victims, and abandons on stage three included Simon Gerrans (Orica-GreenEdge) and incumbent white jersey Tom Dumoulin (Giant-Alpecin).

Others soldiered on to the finish; yellow jersey Fabian Cancellara (Trek Factory) finished over 11 minutes behind the stage winner Joaquim Rodríguez and was taken to hospital to be diagnosed with a fractured vertebrae (he quit the Tour later that evening). Michael Matthews (Orica-GreenEdge) crossed the line nearly half an hour later, his jersey in tatters and his eyes framed by dry tears.

The impact of this opening week will be felt as the race continues; there will be some tired legs out there by the time the Tour reaches the first rest day on Monday.

Our Tour experts

Malcolm Elliott

The former bunch galloper is driving VIPs on the Tour

Tours ridden: 2

"It's horrible as a sprinter to be in the situation Mark Cavendish found himself in at the end of stage two. I just know that Cav will have been on Mark Renshaw's wheel thinking, 'please just keep going'. At that moment you're referencing the finish line, the countdown boards, and where and when the surge is coming at you from behind. It's down to pure instinct and experience, instinctively knowing what to go, where to go, and when to go.

You could tell when Cavendish did launch he didn't seem fully committed because he knew it felt too far out. It had shades of the first night nerves of last year. It wasn't pressure like last

year in Harrogate, but he wanted to get one under his belt and it's not gone well for him.

I think as a sprinter you don't ever really accept that you were beaten. I don't think Cavendish fears André Greipel. Marcel Kittel on his day is a bit more unsettling for Cav.

Personally I think that if he could have had just another 50m out of Renshaw we'd have seen him go with a lot more conviction and he'd have put one or two more lengths into the other guys in those first 10 or 20 yards. When he looks back at it, he can replay that sprint in a way that he would have won it."



Cedric Vasseur

Our resident Frenchman reports from a motorbike for TV

Tours ridden: 10

"We already have a good battle for the GC, not only in the time trial, but also in the wind and rain of stage two. Contador behaved like the boss of the bunch, even more than Froome. He took the initiative to create echelons early. He wants to show to the bunch that he and his team has to be respected. Before, in the Giro d'Italia, we had the feeling that the team was not super. I was surprised by Tinkoff's level, riding alongside Etixx, which is more of a Classics team. Froome and Contador really took advantage on the second stage. It could've been four minutes had the wind not died down. Quintana has to thank his team;

they were pulling hard to save him — they could've already been finished. Fortunately, for the fans and for Quintana, Nibali and others, not everyone was pulling at the front. Stannard and Thomas could've pulled more to take it out to two minutes or more. We know that Froome is not really in love with Dutch racing. I think he was afraid. Sometimes it was going so fast, almost 60kph in the crosswinds. I think [Sky DS] Servais Knaben was careful — instead of risking Froome, he had the team stay around him and be cautious."



Charly Wegelius

The Yorkshireman is a sports director with Cannondale-Garmin

Tours ridden: 3

"Riding in the wind as part of an organised team is one of the things I think that a winner of the Tour de France should be able to do. So early in the Tour is always a nervous time anyway but, as it turned out, Sunday's stage in the crosswinds was a little less dramatic than it might have been. Time differences weren't that big. However, I do get the feeling that teams are becoming resigned to accepting that losing time in this technically difficult first week of the race is almost inevitable. That's not a particularly nice feeling when you work in a team and are racing with that possibility

day to day, but I also understand stages like these are a sure way to provoke aggressive racing. You can plan as much as you like for such stages but out on the road, some things still fall to chance.

Just playing with the thought, imagine a Tour where the cobbles were four stages from the end. Would people like that? It would sure make me very nervous that weeks of hard work could go to waste. It's a fine line between agitating the race in a positive way and letting misfortune decide it. I think everybody still wants the most complete rider to win."



Stage 1

Utrecht 13.8km

Saturday July 4

Dennis breaks Tour time trial record

Australian averages 55.446kph to beat Chris Boardman's 1994 record

Hugh Gladstone

Rohan Dennis (BMC) claimed not only the first yellow jersey of this year's race but set a record for the fastest ever Tour de France individual time trial. The 25-year-old Australian averaged 55.446kph, bettering the 55.152kph mark previously set by Chris Boardman in the prologue of the 1994 Tour.

Was that expected?

The three main favourites for the stage were those he immediately beat but Dennis had been targeting this day ever since he learned the Tour would start with a time trial. "It's going to be quick," he had promised *Cycling Weekly* pre-race. "I want to win it."

How was he so quick?

The distance and pan-flat, flowy course was just to the former World Hour record holder's liking. An Adelaide native, Dennis was unfazed by roasting temperatures, while the results sheet

suggests he also benefited from a relatively early start.

Where were the GC men?

The last man off, Vincenzo Nibali was the speediest of the big four 43 seconds back, but Chris Froome, Alberto Contador and Nairo Quintana were all within 18 seconds of him.

A strong ride by Steve Cummings, too...

The Merseysider showed great form but was disappointed to finish in 10th place. "I never really felt composed," he told *CW*. Fellow Brits Geraint Thomas and Alex Dowsett claimed 12th and 13th.

STAGE INFO

WEATHER Very hot, dry
TERRAIN Pancake flat



Former Hour record holder
Dennis now has a new accolade

GADGETS ON SHOW AT THE PROLOGUE

Cool technology

While the Tour de France in general is often used as the bicycle industry's showcase, there's nothing quite like a time trial for showing off new gizmos.

LottonNL-Jumbo riders found one marginal gain in sporting transparent Nopinz pockets on their Santini skinsuits. Tucking away their race number in these windows simply prevented any danger of it flapping in the wind.

Slightly more oddly, Trek's in-house component company Bontrager used the time trial to showcase the daylight visibility of

a new rear bike light, despite there being no discernible gain for riders in the race.

Then off course you have the bikes themselves: space-age wizardry designed to fight the wind, wheeled out one rider at a time. But where the arms race really intensified in Utrecht was how the riders went about staying cool in mid-30s heat.

The key aim here is to keep a rider's core temperature down, especially as they — paradoxically — warm up their muscles before the start on static trainers.



Ice vests have become such a commonplace piece of a team's kit nowadays, particularly for hot time trials, that many — like BMC's — are neatly liveried up in team's colours and logos. Defending Tour champion Vincenzo Nibali rolled up to the start with ice cubes dangling off him. Adam Yates loosened up in a Craft jacket that pumped coolant from a nearby



machine all around his body. Even then the heat got to him after just two or three kilometres of riding.

"It's hard to explain to people who have never experienced a race in the heat," he said afterwards. "You just shut down, you have no power."

While keeping cool during a prologue is one thing, long hot road stages are another. "Maybe between the favourites it will be a factor in who takes the jersey," said IAM's Jérôme Coppel. In such circumstances, ice vests and cool showers can only play a part before and after stages so riders have to resort to simple things like drinking a lot and pouring water over their head.

ON THE PODIUM



Rohan Dennis
(to be worn by BMC)



Rohan Dennis
(to be worn by Tony Martin)



N/A
N/A



Rohan Dennis
(to be worn by Tom Dumoulin)

RESULTS

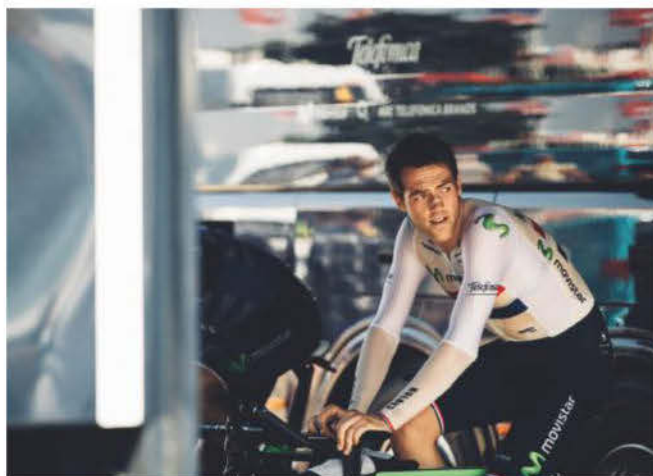
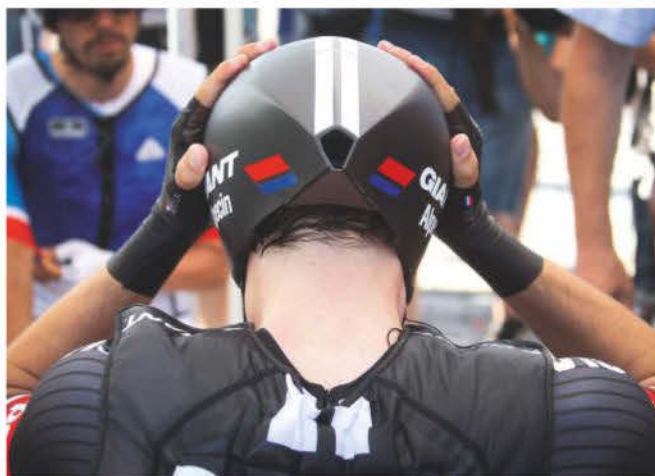
Tour de France 2015, stage one: individual time trial

1. Rohan Dennis (Aus) BMC Racing in 14.56
 2. Tony Martin (Ger) Etixx-Quick Step at 0.05
 3. Fabian Cancellara (Sui) Trek Factory Racing at 0.06
 4. Tom Dumoulin (Ned) Giant-Alpecin at 0.08
 5. Jos van Emden (Ned) LottoNL-Jumbo at 0.15
 6. Jonathan Castroviejo (Esp) Movistar at 0.23
 7. Matthias Brändle (Aut) IAM Cycling at 0.23
 8. Adriano Malori (Ita) Movistar at 0.29
 9. Wilco Kelderman (Ned) LottoNL-Jumbo at 0.30
 10. Steve Cummings (GBr) MTN-Qhubeka at 0.32
- Other**
12. Geraint Thomas (GBr) Team Sky at 0.33
 13. Alex Dowsett (GBr) Movistar at 0.36
 22. Vincenzo Nibali (Ita) Astana at 0.43
 39. Chris Froome (GBr) Team Sky at 0.50
 46. Alberto Contador (Esp) Tinkoff-Saxo at 0.58
 57. Nairo Quintana (Col) Movistar at 1.01

Overall classification after stage one

1. Rohan Dennis (Aus) BMC Racing in 14.56
2. Tony Martin (Ger) Etixx-QuickStep at 0.05
3. Fabian Cancellara (Sui) Trek Factory Racing at 0.06
4. Tom Dumoulin (Ned) Giant-Alpecin at 0.08
5. Jos van Emden (Ned) LottoNL-Jumbo at 0.15
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9. Wilco Kelderman (Ned) LottoNL-Jumbo at 0.30
10. Steve Cummings (GBr) MTN-Qhubeka at 0.32

Stage 1 in pictures

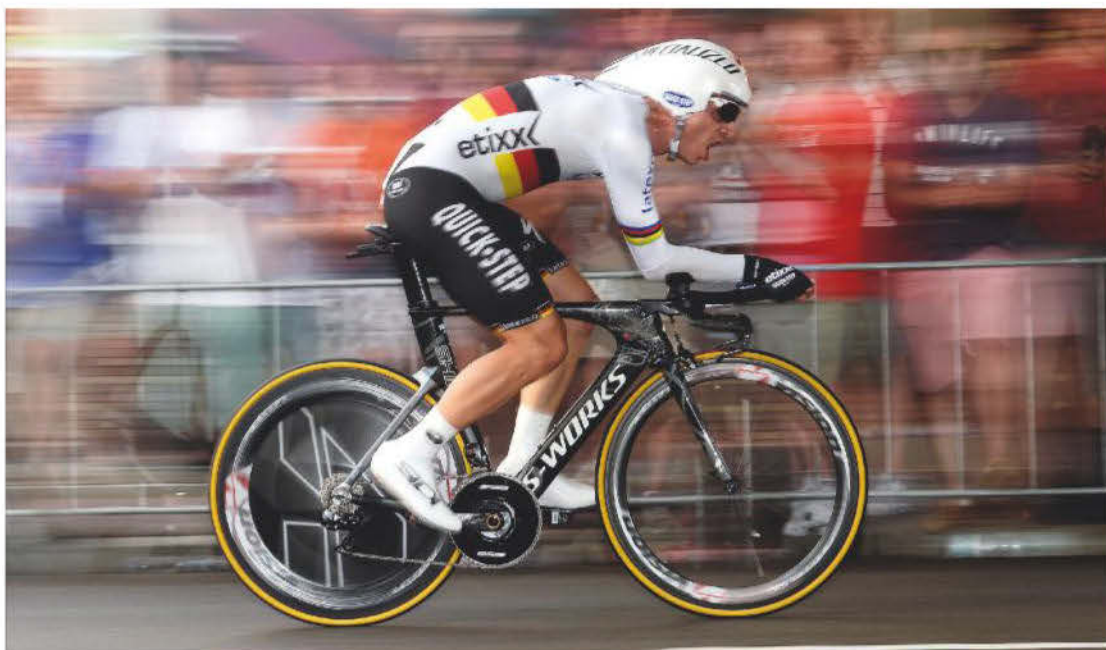
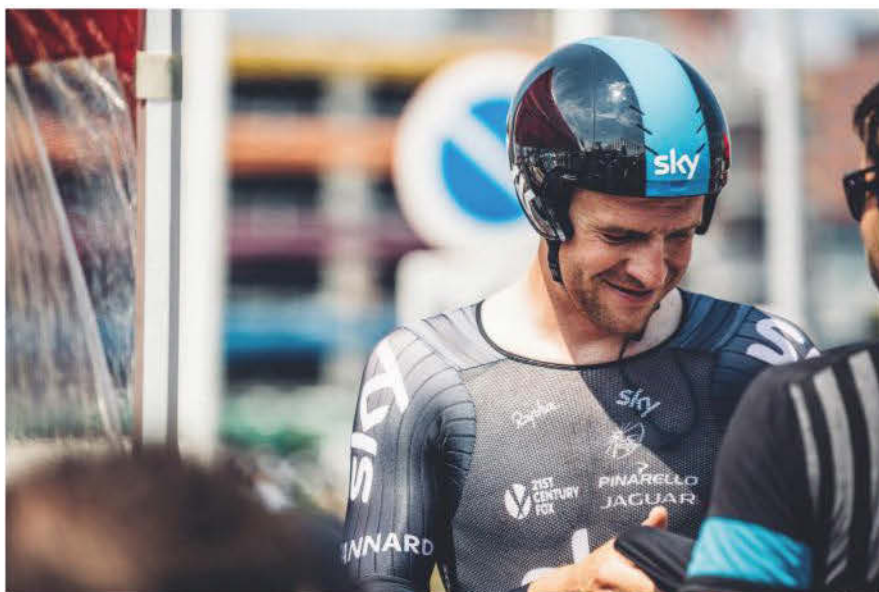




Main: Local hero Laurens ten Dam gets his Tour under way
Far left: Tom Dumoulin put in a fine performance to finish fourth on home turf, just eight seconds behind the winner
Left: Alex Dowsett couldn't match fellow former Hour record holder Dennis and had to settle for 13th overall



Left: Surprise winner Rohan Dennis marked his arrival as a world-class Grand Tour rider
Below: Relief is written all over Ian Stannard's face having dispensed with the misery of the TT bike
Bottom: Tony Martin's trademark style and infamous gaping mouth could only get within five seconds of Dennis



Stage 2

Utrecht > Neeltje Jans 166km

Sunday July 5

Dutch stage sees Tour burst into life

Greipel gets better of Cavendish on dramatic day

Richard Abraham

André Greipel (Lotto-Soudal) took first blood in the battle for sprint supremacy at the Tour de France on a second pan-flat day in the Netherlands. He pipped Peter Sagan and Fabian Cancellara.

How did he win?

The German rode the perfect sprint, emerging late from Mark Cavendish's wheel into a head/crosswind.

Cancellara took yellow thanks to four bonus seconds; Cav faded to fourth.

Were there crosswinds?

Those much-talked about *bordures* materialised on a day that saw wind, rain and temperatures range from 29 to 15 degrees. After a number of early echelons failed to stick on the twisty, wet and road-furniture strewn lanes, a key split composed of 24 riders formed on the coast with 50km to go. "Sometimes it was quite dramatic," explained Lotto-Soudal boss Marc Sergeant. "We had several crashes. We were just hoping Greipel was there."

Who lost out?

Chris Froome, Alberto Contador and Tejay van Garderen made the cut but Nairo Quintana, Vincenzo Nibali and all the French contenders conceded 1:28 overall. Overnight race leader Rohan Dennis also finished in the second group. Tony Martin again narrowly missed out on his first yellow jersey.

Vaarwel Holland

Millions of Dutch fans gave the Tour a special welcome, with many of them putting on a brave face and taking shelter from the weather behind road signage. We'll see them again on Alpe d'Huez.

STAGE INFO

WEATHER
Wind, rain, heat.
TERRAIN Pancake flat



Echelons form in the wind

THE ART OF FORMING AN ECHELON

Wind skill factor

Riding in the echelons of the Tour de France is a dark art. Talk of splitting the field in the crosswinds is cheap, but capitalising on the weather to form and maintain a split in the bunch requires a skilful blend of technique, tactics and brute force.

Echelons are simultaneously made from meticulous planning and spur-of-the-moment decisions. Teams need to know where the wind might blow, down to the nearest roundabout but it's not as simple as just sending your riders to the front and riding hard.

"You can't do it on your own; it's important that you have more teams who want to do the same too," explained LottoNL-Jumbo's Dutch DS, Frans Maassen.

"If you try to split it three times and no one wants to work with you, then your riders are f***ed, so it's important to ride smart. Sometimes when the wind is perfect and no one wants to ride, then it's no go."

Maassen's team knew the roads of stage two well — road captain Tom Leezer grew up on the coast and Wilco Kelderman's girlfriend



**Ian Stannard
leads the echelon**

lives near the sea — but they missed the key split of 24 when it happened with around 50km to the finish. It was Lotto-Soudal, Etixx-Quick Step, Team Sky and Tinkoff-Saxo who sensed the moment was right and squeezed the throttle; in a fleeting moment rider number 25 dropped the wheel, dived across the road from the thin line, and the split was made.

“It was getting stressful and I said to Froomey, ‘Are you up for it?’” explained Geraint Thomas. “He said, ‘Yeah,’ so I said on the radio, ‘Right boys, let’s look to really attack when we hit the canal road,’ which was where it all split.”

GC riders and teams don’t always enjoy having to ride aggressively on a flat stage. Chaotic and ultimately uncontrollable, it’s racing out of their comfort zone, racing that rewards the spontaneous. Yet they do so because it is the lesser of two evils. “It’s easier to fight to stay in the echelon than to come later when it’s possible that the gaps have opened up and you are dropped,” added Maassen.

ON THE PODIUM



**Fabian Cancellara
Trek Factory**



**André Greipel
Lotto-Soudal**



**N/A
N/A**



**Tom Dumoulin
Giant-Alpecin**

RESULTS

Tour de France 2015, stage two

1. André Greipel (Ger) Lotto-Soudal, 3:29.03

2. Peter Sagan (Svk) Tinkoff-Saxo
3. Fabian Cancellara (Sui) Trek
4. Mark Cavendish (GBr) Etixx-Quick Step
5. Daniel Oss (Ita) BMC
6. Greg Van Avermaet (Bel) BMC
7. Chris Froome (GBr) Team Sky
8. Tom Dumoulin (Ned), Giant-Alpecin
9. Tony Martin (Ger), Etixx-Quick Step
10. Warren Barguil (Fra), Giant-Alpecin all at same time

Other

12. Geraint Thomas (GBr) Team Sky at 0.04, 49. Vincenzo Nibali (Ita) Astana, at 1.28, 56. Nairo Quintana (Col) Movistar, at 1.28.

Overall classification after stage two

1. Fabian Cancellara (Sui) Trek in 3:44.01

2. Tony Martin (Ger) Etixx-Quick Step at 0.03
3. Tom Dumoulin (Ned) Giant-Alpecin at 0.06
4. Peter Sagan (Svk) Tinkoff-Saxo at 0.33
5. Geraint Thomas (GBr) Team Sky at 0.35
6. Daniel Oss (Ita) BMC at 0.42
7. Rigoberto Uran (Col) Etixx-Quick Step at 0.42
8. Tejay van Garderen (USA) BMC at 0.44
9. Greg Van Avermaet (Bel) BMC at 0.48
10. Chris Froome (GBr) Team Sky at 0.48

Stage 2 in pictures



Right: Tour champ Nibali leads the desperate chase

Left: The North Sea provided an ominous backdrop to the stage

Below: Supporters took shelter wherever they could find it

Bottom right: Adam Hansen gets a mouthful of mud

Bottom left: How to cheat the wind





Right: Etixx-Quick Step drive on hopeful of a stage win and the yellow jersey. They ended the day with neither
Below: The wind-whipped lead group battle the elements



Stage 3 | Antwerp > Huy 159.5km Monday July 6

Froome surges into yellow

Brit uses Mur de Huy to distance his GC rivals

Richard Windsor

Joaquim Rodríguez (Katusha) won the stage at the top of the Mur de Huy, Chris Froome (Sky) took yellow, while a number of riders including race leader Fabian Cancellara (Trek), were taken out by a huge crash with 50km to go.

Did Froome launch his opening attack?

He did, surging away from the peloton at the foot of the final climb. He was eventually passed by former Flèche Wallonne winner Rodríguez before the line, but it was enough to propel Froome into yellow.

So the GC riders avoided the crash?

Seems so. Most of them finished safely but with some notable time gaps.

a number of riders flying, narrowly missing a lamppost. As a result, the commissaires neutralised the race.

Why was it neutralised?

Because race medical staff were so busy it left no cover for the riders ahead. Not that the riders knew that. "The commissaires were in front waving for us to stop," said Sky's Geraint Thomas. "No one knew what was going on; people were arguing."

Neutralisation allowed fallen riders, including yellow jersey Cancellara, to rejoin the front group before the racing kicked off again and spat them back out.

How did the crash happen?

William Bonnet (FDJ) appeared to touch a wheel near the front of the bunch at high speed, which sent

STAGE INFO

WEATHER Sunny, dry
TERRAIN Undulating with a tough finishing climb



Froome and Rodríguez duel on the Mur de Huy

AFRICA'S DOUBLE TOUR DEBUT

Eritreans making history at the Tour

Not only are Daniel Teklehaimanot and MTN-Qhubeka team-mate Merhawi Kudus the first riders from their nation to ride the Tour, they're also the first black Africans to do so.

"It's been a dream for me for a long time," Teklehaimanot said.

"I didn't expect it to be like this. Of course all the Dutch people were really supportive of everyone, but to be on the start line was a big, big deal for me."

Kudus, who makes his Tour debut at just 21 years old, hasn't had to wait as long as the 26-year-old Teklehaimanot, who turned pro in 2010 with the Cervélo Test Team before a three-year spell with Orica-GreenEdge, prior to joining MTN in 2014.

But both are acutely aware of the significance of riding the Tour.

"It's good for me and my country that it's not only one, it's two riders," Teklehaimanot



said. "So I'm happy to be beside my friend."

"[Our inclusion in the Tour] is already one of the biggest things to happen to cycling in Africa, so it's thanks to MTN-Qhubeka who are supporting riders from home countries."

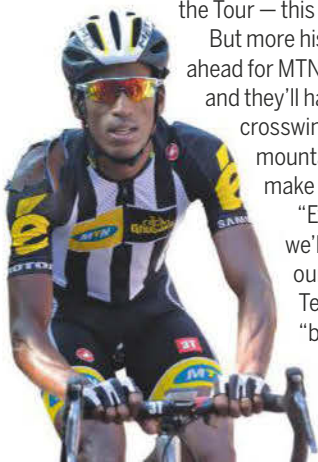
The passionate support for the pair transformed a section of the Tour route into little 'Eritrean Corners' and the thousands of Eritreans living in the Netherlands and Europe are

relishing the chance to see their nation at the very top of a sport.

"I live in the Netherlands," said Solomon Accad, one of the Eritrean fans out in support. "I'm a supporter of cycling now because we've got these riders in the Tour — this is historic."

But more history still lies ahead for MTN's Eritrean pair, and they'll have to tackle crosswinds, cobbles and mountains if they are to make it to Paris.

"Every stage we'll try and do our best," said Teklehaimanot, "but there's still a long way to go."



RESULTS

1. Joaquim Rodríguez (Esp) Katusha in 3:26.54;

2. Chris Froome (GBR) Team Sky at same time
3. Alexis Vuillermoz (Fra) Ag2r at 0.04
4. Daniel Martin (Irl) Cannondale-Garmin at 0.05
5. Tony Gallopin (Fra) Lotto-Soudal at 0.08
6. Tejay van Garderen (USA) BMC Racing at 0.11
7. Vincenzo Nibali (Ita) Astana at 0.11
8. Simon Yates (GBR) Orica-GreenEdge at 0.11
9. Nairo Quintana (Col) Movistar at 0.11
10. Bauke Mollema (Ned) Trek Factory Racing at 0.11
- Others** 12. Alberto Contador (Esp) Tinkoff-Saxo at 0.18; 188. Fabian Cancellara (Sui) Trek Factory Racing at 11.43.

Overall classification after stage three

1. Chris Froome (GBR) Team Sky in 7:11.37
2. Tony Martin (Ger) Etixx-Quick Step at 0.01
3. Tejay van Garderen (USA) BMC Racing at 0.13
4. Tony Gallopin (Fra) Lotto-Soudal at 0.26
5. Greg Van Avermaet (Bel) BMC Racing at 0.28
6. Peter Sagan (Svk) Tinkoff-Saxo at 0.31
7. Rigoberto Uran (Col) Etixx-Quick Step at 0.34
8. Alberto Contador (Esp) Tinkoff-Saxo at 0.36
9. Geraint Thomas (GBR) Team Sky at 1.03
10. Zdenek Stybar (Cze) Etixx-Quick Step at 1.04
- Others** 13. Vincenzo Nibali (Ita) Astana at 1.38; 17. Nairo Quintana (Col) Movistar at 1.56; 45. Simon Yates (GBR) Orica-GreenEdge at 5.17.

ON THE PODIUM



Chris Froome
Team Sky



André Greipel
Lotto-Soudal



Joaquim Rodríguez
Katusha



Peter Sagan
Tinkoff-Saxo

Stage 3 in pictures



Clockwise from top:

Peter Kennaugh rolls past Antwerp's majestic hôtel de ville; the peloton scythes its way through the Flandrian wheat fields; Fabian Cancellara's joy of the maillot jaune was short-lived after getting caught up in a crash that saw the race neutralised. The Swiss star was forced to withdraw due to injury along with Tom Dumoulin, Daryl Impey, Simon Gerrans, William Bonnet and Dmitry Kozontchuk





Tour starters

Who's that rider in the break? Find out with our full list of the 198 riders who took to the start line of the 2015 Tour de France

Astana (Kaz)

Directeur sportifs:

Alexandr Shefer/
Dmitriy Fofonov

Kit: Specialized bikes,
Campagnolo components



- 1 Vincenzo Nibali (Ita)
- 2 Lars Boom (Ned)
- 3 Jakob Fuglsang (Den)
- 4 Andriy Grivko (Ukr)
- 5 Dmitriy Gruzdev (Kaz)
- 6 Tanel Kangert (Est)
- 7 Michele Scarponi (Ita)
- 8 Rein Taaramäe (Est)
- 9 Lieuwe Westra (Ned)

Ag2r La Mondiale (Fra)

Directeur sportifs:

Vincent Lavenu/
Julien Jurdie

Kit: Focus bikes,
SRAM components



- 11 Jean-Christophe Péraud (Fra)
- 12 Romain Bardet (Fra)
- 13 Jan Bakelants (Bel)
- 14 Mikael Cherel (Fra)
- 15 Ben Gastauer (Ned)
- 16 Damien Gaudin (Fra)
- 17 Christophe Riblon (Fra)
- 18 Johan Vansummeren (Bel)
- 19 Alexis Vuillermoz (Fra)

FDJ (Fra)

Directeur sportifs:

Thierry Bricaud/Yvon Madiot

Kit: Lapierre bikes,
Shimano components



- 21 Thibaut Pinot (Fra)
- 22 William Bonnet (Fra)
- 23 Sébastien Chavanel (Fra)
- 24 Arnaud Démare (Fra)

- 25 Alexandre Geniez (Fra)
- 26 Matthieu Ladagnous (Fra)
- 27 Steve Morabito (Sui)
- 28 Jérémy Roy (Fra)
- 29 Benoît Vaugrenard (Fra)

Team Sky (GBR)

Directeur sportifs:

Nicolas Portal/
Servais Knaven

Kit: Pinarello bikes,
Shimano components



- 31 Chris Froome (GBR)
- 32 Peter Kennaugh (GBR)
- 33 Leopold König (Cze)
- 34 Wout Poels (Ned)
- 35 Richie Porte (Aus)
- 36 Nicolas Roche (Irl)
- 37 Luke Rowe (GBR)
- 38 Ian Stannard (GBR)
- 39 Geraint Thomas (GBR)

Tinkoff-Saxo (Rus)

Directeur sportifs:

Steven de Jongh/Sean Yates

Kit: Specialized bikes,
Shimano components



- 41 Alberto Contador (Esp)
- 42 Ivan Basso (Ita)
- 43 Daniele Bennati (Ita)
- 44 Roman Kreuziger (Cze)
- 45 Rafal Majka (Pol)
- 46 Michael Rogers (Aus)
- 47 Peter Sagan (Svk)
- 48 Matteo Tosatto (Ita)
- 49 Michael Valgren (Den)

Movistar (Esp)

Directeur sportifs:

José Luis Arrieta/
Vicente Garcia

Kit: Canyon bikes,
Campagnolo components



- 51 Nairo Quintana (Col)
- 52 Winner Anacona (Col)
- 53 Jonathan Castroviejo (Esp)
- 54 Alex Dowsett (GBR)
- 55 Imanol Erviti (Esp)
- 56 José Herrada (Esp)
- 57 Gorka Izagirre (Esp)
- 58 Adriano Malori (Ita)
- 59 Alejandro Valverde (Esp)

BMC Racing Team (USA)

Directeur sportifs:

Yvon Ledanois/
Max Sciandri

Kit: BMC bikes,
Shimano components



- 61 Tejay van Garderen (USA)
- 62 Damiano Caruso (Ita)
- 63 Rohan Dennis (Aus)
- 64 Daniel Oss (Ita)
- 65 Manuel Quinziato (Ita)
- 66 Samuel Sanchez (Esp)
- 67 Michael Schar (Sui)
- 68 Greg Van Avermaet (Bel)
- 69 Danilo Wyss (Sui)

Lotto-Soudal (Bel)

Directeur sportifs:

Herman Frison/Bart Leysen

Kit: Ridley bikes, Campagnolo components



- 71 Tony Gallopin (Fra)
- 72 Lars Bak (Den)
- 73 Thomas De Gendt (Bel)
- 74 Jens Debusschere (Bel)
- 75 André Greipel (Ger)
- 76 Adam Hansen (Aus)
- 77 Greg Henderson (NZI)
- 78 Marcel Sieberg (Ger)
- 79 Tim Wellens (Bel)

Giant-Alpecin (Ger)

Directeur sportifs:

Marc Reef/

Christian Guibertau

Kit: Giant bikes,
Shimano components



- 81 John Degenkolb (Ger)
- 82 Warren Barguil (Fra)
- 83 Roy Curvers (Ned)
- 84 Koen de Kort (Ned)
- 85 Tom Dumoulin (Ned)
- 86 Simon Geschke (Ger)
- 87 Georg Preidler (Aut)
- 88 Ramon Sinkeldam (Ned)
- 89 Albert Timmer (Ned)

Katusha (Rus)

Directeur sportifs:

José Azevedo/
Torsten Schmidt

Kit: Canyon bikes,
Shimano components



- 91 Joaquim Rodriguez (Esp)
- 92 Giampaolo Caruso (Ita)
- 93 Jacopo Guarnieri (Ita)
- 94 Marco Haller (Aut)
- 95 Dmitry Kozontchuk (Rus)
- 96 Alexander Kristoff (Nor)
- 97 Alberto Losada (Esp)
- 98 Tiago Machado (Por)
- 99 Luca Paolini (Ita)

Orica-Green Edge (Aus)

Directeur sportifs:

Matt White/

Laurenzo Lapage

Kit: Scott bikes,
Shimano components



- 101 Simon Gerrans (Aus)
- 102 Michael Albasini (Sui)
- 103 Luke Durbridge (Aus)
- 104 Daryl Impey (RSA)
- 105 Michael Matthews (Aus)
- 106 Svein Tuft (Can)
- 107 Pieter Weening (Ned)
- 108 Adam Yates (GBR)
- 109 Simon Yates (GBR)

Etixx-Quick Step (Bel)

Directeur sportifs:

Wilfried Peeters/Davide Bramati

Kit: Specialized bikes,
Shimano components



- 111 Michal Kwiatkowski (Pol)
- 112 Mark Cavendish (GBr)
- 113 Michal Golas (Pol)
- 114 Tony Martin (Ger)
- 115 Mark Renshaw (Aus)
- 116 Zdenek Stybar (Cze)
- 117 Matteo Trentin (Ita)
- 118 Rigoberto Uran (Col)
- 119 Julien Vermote (Bel)

Europcar (Fra)

Directeur sportifs:

Andy Flickinger/Lylian Lebreton

Kit: Colnago bikes,
Campagnolo components



- 121 Pierre Rolland (Fra)
- 122 Bryan Coquard (Fra)
- 123 Cyril Gautier (Fra)
- 124 Yohann Gene (Fra)
- 125 Bryan Nauleau (Fra)
- 126 Perrig Quemeneur (Fra)
- 127 Romain Sicard (Fra)
- 128 Angélo Tulik (Fra)
- 129 Thomas Voeckler (Fra)

Lotto NL-Jumbo (Ned)

Directeur sportifs:

Nico Verhoeven/
Frans Maassen

Kit: Bianchi bikes,
Shimano components



- 131 Robert Gesink (Ned)
- 132 Wilco Kelderman (Ned)
- 133 Steven Kruijswijk (Ned)
- 134 Tom Leezer (Ned)
- 135 Paul Martens (Ger)
- 136 Bram Tankink (Ned)
- 137 Laurens Ten Dam (Ned)
- 138 Jos van Emden (Ned)
- 139 Sep Vanmarcke (Bel)

Trek Factory Racing (USA)

Directeur sportifs:

Kim Andersen/
Alain Gallopin

Kit: Trek bikes,
Shimano components



- 141 Bauke Mollema (Ned)
- 142 Julian Arredondo (Col)
- 143 Fabian Cancellara (Sui)
- 144 Stijn Devolder (Bel)
- 145 Laurent Didier (Lux)



- 146 Markel Irizar (Esp)
- 147 Bob Jungels (Lux)
- 148 Gregory Rast (Sui)
- 149 Haimar Zubeldia (Esp)

Lampre-Merida (Ita)

Directeur sportifs:

Philippe Mauduit/
Simone Pedrazzini

Kit: Merida bikes,
Shimano components



- 151 Rui Costa (Por)
- 152 Matteo Bono (Ita)
- 153 Davide Cimolai (Ita)
- 154 Kristijan Durasek (Cro)
- 155 Nelson Oliveira (Por)
- 156 Rubén Plaza (Esp)
- 157 Filippo Pozzato (Ita)
- 158 José Serpa (Col)
- 159 Rafael Valls (Esp)

Cannondale-Garmin (USA)

Directeur sportifs:

Charly Wegelius/
Robert Hunter

Kit: Cannondale bikes,
Shimano components



- 161 Andrew Talansky (USA)
- 162 Jack Bauer (NZl)
- 163 Nathan Haas (Aus)
- 164 Ryder Hesjedal (Can)
- 165 Kristijan Koren (Slo)
- 166 Sebastian Langeveld (Ned)
- 167 Dan Martin (Irl)
- 168 Ramunas Navardauskas (Ltu)
- 169 Dylan van Baarle (Ned)

Cofidis (Fra)

Directeur sportifs:

Didier Rous/Stéphane Augé

Kit: Orbea bikes,
Shimano components



- 171 Nacer Bouhanni (Fra)
- 172 Nicolas Edet (Fra)
- 173 Christophe Laporte (Fra)
- 174 Luis Angel Maté (Esp)
- 175 Daniel Navarro (Esp)
- 176 Florian Sénéchal (Fra)
- 177 Julien Simon (Fra)
- 178 Geoffrey Soupe (Fra)
- 179 Kenneth Vanbilsen (Bel)

IAM Cycling (Sui)

Directeur sportifs:

Eddy Seigneur/Mario Chiesa

Kit: Scott bikes,
Shimano components



- 181 Mathias Frank (Sui)
- 182 Matthias Brändle (Aut)
- 183 Sylvain Chavanel (Fra)
- 184 Stef Clement (Ned)
- 185 Jérôme Coppel (Fra)
- 186 Martin Elmiger (Sui)
- 187 Reto Hollenstein (Sui)
- 188 Jarlinson Pantano (Col)
- 189 Marcel Wyss (Sui)

Bora-Argon 18 (Ger)

Directeur sportifs:

Enrico Poitschke/
Christian Pomer

Kit: Argon bikes,
Shimano components



- 191 Dominik Nerz (Ger)
- 192 Jan Bárta (Cze)
- 193 Sam Bennett (Irl)
- 194 Emanuel Buchmann (Ger)
- 195 Zakkari Dempster (Aus)
- 196 Bartosz Huzarski (Pol)
- 197 José Mendes (Por)
- 198 Andreas Schilling (Ger)
- 199 Paul Voss (Ger)

Bretagne-Sèche Environnement (Fra)

Directeur sportifs:

Emmanuel Hubert/Roger Trehin

Kit: Look bikes,
Shimano components



- 201 Eduardo Sepúlveda (Arg)
- 202 Frédéric Brun (Fra)
- 203 Anthony Delaplace (Fra)
- 204 Pierrick Fedrigo (Fra)
- 205 Brice Feillu (Fra)
- 206 Armindo Fonseca (Fra)
- 207 Arnaud Gerard (Fra)
- 208 Pierre-Luc Perichon (Fra)
- 209 Florian Vachon (Fra)

MTN-Qhubeka (RSA)

Directeur sportifs:

Jens Zemke/
Alex Sans Vega

Kit: Cervélo bikes,
Rotor components



- 211 Edvald Boasson Hagen (Nor)
- 212 Steve Cummings (GBr)
- 213 Tyler Farrar (USA)
- 214 Jacques Janse van Rensburg (RSA)
- 215 Reinardt Janse van Rensburg (RSA)
- 216 Merhawi Kudus (Eri)
- 217 Louis Meintjes (RSA)
- 218 Serge Pauwels (Bel)
- 219 Daniel Teklehaimanot (Eri)

Cycling WEEKLY

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Chris Froome leads his GC rivals up
the Mur de Huy on stage three.

Photo: Getty Images







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Cannondale's new SuperSix Evo Hi-Mod

Oliver Bridgewood tests the new bike that Cannondale-Garmin are riding at the Tour de France. Is it stiffer, lighter and more aerodynamic than its predecessor?

If you quickly glance at the new Evo you could be forgiven for thinking that Cannondale had designed it using a piece of tracing paper over the last model. To the untrained eye, it outwardly looks very similar, but let me assure you, it is different.

Cannondale told us: "To have the best possible performance, you really need to have the best balance of every area of performance. Everyone is looking for an edge, but rather than focus on a single area, such as being the stiffest, most aero, lightest or most compliant, Cannondale is keen to balance all the elements and just be the best."

The new Evo is lighter than the outgoing model — the total weight for a size 56cm can be broken down as 777g for the frame, 280g for the fork, 66g for the headset and 180g for the seatpost. That's 1,303g in total. For reference, the equivalent Trek Emonda SLR has a claimed weight of 1,312g.

Lightweight chainset

A big contribution to lowering the overall weight comes from the new Hollowgram SiSL2 chainset and proprietary Spider Ring SL. Cannondale says that it's the ultimate in light weight and stiffness and claim that it's 58g lighter and 72 per cent stiffer than a Dura-Ace 9000 chainset.

The fork has been completely

redesigned and is an impressive single piece construction with an integrated carbon crown race and carbon dropouts. The new fork offers a claimed 21 per cent more deflection, which out on the road means a more balanced ride that is designed to improve cornering, handling and overall comfort.

Precision carbon

The BB also features an optimised carbon lay-up making it a claimed 11 per cent stiffer, with more stiffening layers and staggered layers of high modulus fibres. This creates a leaf spring effect.

Cannondale has worked hard in this area and paid close attention to stiffness in general. Interestingly, the engineers were keen to stress that they could have made the bike stiffer in areas such as the fork and bottom bracket, but this would compromise the frame in other ways, particularly handling, rendering the bike more "chattery" in the corners.

The trend for the next generation of climbing bikes is certain to improve aerodynamics, something we have seen with the new Canyon Ultimate CF SLX and Merida Scultura. So what is Cannondale's approach? TAP, which stands for Truncated Aero Profiles, amounting to subtle aero tube shapes in key areas. Cannondale was conscious not to go too aero, as this would mean



Our test bike was a team edition bike with Dura-Ace Di2. The bike will be available in several different builds

compromising other areas, such as stiffness and comfort. Overall the new frame is a claimed six watts more efficient at 45kph.

Present at the launch were Cannondale-Garmin pro riders Joe Dombrowski, Ted King and Davide Formolo, also riding the new Evo for the first time. When asked what he thought of the new bike at the top of a testing climb, King declared: "It's awesome. The front end is noticeably stiff and more twitchy, but in a good way." Dombrowski was hugely enthusiastic about the new bike too, saying: "The head tube feels stiffer. I really like it."



OUR TAKE

I put the Evo through its paces on the fearsome Kitzbüheler Horn, a climb that is 9.7km of 13 per cent unrelenting brutality. As you would expect, a bike weighing 6.38kg (without pedals) was just the ticket on such steep gradients. And although I would have preferred a bottom gear of 34-32 rather than the 36-28, the bike danced up.

But it is descending and cornering where the new Evo truly excels.

Cornering on this bike is incredible. It felt glued to the road. When pushing the limits on switchbacks, you can often detect some front or rear wheel skip, but I felt that I got nowhere near the limits of the new Evo's capabilities.

Considering the supreme stiffness and low weight, this bike is impressively comfortable. But based on first impressions, it did not feel quite as compliant as the new Canyon Ultimate CF SLX. It is fitting that the materials used to make the frame are the same in ballistic armouring. This bike is a weapon.

HOT STUFF

Muc-Off Fabric Protect

Not content with cleaning and lubing your bike, Muc-Off has launched Fabric Protect spray to stop your outdoor clothing from getting dirty. Its hydrophobic coating is claimed to repel not just water but ketchup, honey, eggs and oil. Sounds like an excuse for a messy barbecue.

Contact:

www.muc-off.com

Price: £10

Test report: September



SKS Airboy mini-pump

At 60 grams and just over 17cm long, the Airboy is pretty mini. The anodised body looks smart too. But how well does it do its job? Doubtless we'll find out by the side of the road somewhere in Surrey.

Contact: www.zyro.co.uk

Price: £24.99

Test report: August



Shimano Sport Camera

Waterproof, dustproof, easy to use and weighing just 86 grams, this action camera ticks all the boxes. We're out and about recording our rides to see if it will stay the distance and impress our mates with videos of our exploits.

Contact: www.shimano-sport-camera.com

Price: £249.99

Test report:

August



Howies Little Haven backpack £39

Product of the week

The Little Haven pack has a single main pocket, two small zipped pockets and has 10 litres of storage. If you need a bit more space, the 18-litre Broad Haven has similar features. The straps are made of mesh to reduce sweat build-up, and the back has four cushioned areas to make it comfortable to wear and ensure good ventilation. There are some nice cycling-specific features such as the winders for the straps so that the ends don't flap around, helmet hanging loops, strategically placed reflective strips, a light loop and a pouch to take a hydration bladder. In a pocket at the bottom of the pack a blue rain cover is stashed, with a reflective 'keep right' sign. *Paul Norman* **498g**
www.howies.co.uk

10



Catlike Mixino helmet £169.99

Movistar team's road helmet, the Mixino, uses Catlike's distinctive design, with 39 vents and internal channels to direct airflow. Incorporating graphene into the shell has allowed Catlike to reduce the helmet's weight while retaining its strength. Although it's only got three padding strips, it's remarkably comfortable with a deep fit that suited my head shape really well and produced minimal pressure lines across the forehead. The rear cradle is easily adjustable and ensures a firm fit too. All those vents keep the helmet cool even on hot days, while the forehead padding kept sweat out of my eyes. It's quite a noisy helmet though, as the large number of small vents created wind howl. *Paul Norman* **232g**
www.i-ride.co.uk

9



Isadore Mount Haleakala Climber's Jersey £130

Isadore is the clothing brand of Etixx-Quick Step pro Martin Velits. Named after a volcano in Hawaii, the Climber's jersey is an attractive design. The body is made of a polyester/merino mix with a squared pattern, the sleeves of polyester/Lycra with a swirly design and it's finished with contrasting edging. There's a wind flap behind the front zip and a fourth zippered rear pocket. Although billed as ultra-lightweight, this jersey is not as 'barely there' as some other brands' climber's jerseys and is also quite generously sized — although I'm usually a medium a small fitted just fine. It's comfortable to wear, well-ventilated and coped well with hot, windless climbs. The ochre colour makes a great change from the usual bright colours, too.

9

Paul Norman **156g**
www.isadore-apparel.com





Assos milleSock_evo7 £14.99

These summer socks from Assos are light, airy and comfortable in warm conditions. The heels and toes are reinforced and the area over the mid-foot is made of an open weave for improved ventilation. Although they felt a bit cold when I first got going, my feet soon warmed up and remained at a comfortable temperature. The heel and toe areas seem well padded and I felt well cosseted in my shoes with no obvious hot spots. The socks are made of a synthetic fabric and there was no sweat build-up and, better still, no pong after hotter rides.

Paul Norman **31g**

www.yellow-limited.com

8

dhb Professional ASV bibshorts £64.99

The dhb Professional shorts have a top quality Elastic Interface Endurance chamois that is dense and not too thick, and quite wide, so there's lots of overlap beyond the edge of the saddle. This leads to a comfortable ride and the well-fitting short fabric makes sure the pad stays firmly in place. There are wide leg-grippers that stop the legs riding up, and the wide straps are comfortable around the upper body. The central

part of the shorts is made from a heavier weight fabric than the outsides of the legs, so there's some abrasion resistance but without making the shorts too hot in warmer weather. The orange highlights give a degree of road presence without being overpoweringly bright.

Paul Norman **171g**

www.wiggle.co.uk

9

Paceline Chamois Butt'r Her' £12.99

Paceline promotes its Her' chamois cream as ideal for women, as it is pH balanced for female skin, although like all Paceline products, it's safe for both men and women to use. Evidently, the difference between a woman's skin pH in this area and mine is minimal, as I found that it worked just fine for me, keeping the dreaded

saddle sores and irritation at bay. Ingredients include shea butter and aloe vera, which have skin soothing properties, green tea extract for its anti-inflammatory action and tea tree extract and lavender oil, which are mildly antiseptic. The chamois cream is made without artificial fragrances or colours and it washes off both skin and shorts with ease.

Paul Norman

8oz tube

www.2pure.co.uk



8

Birzman Feextube 9 and 10 speed kit £8.99

The Feextube is a neat little package that fits easily into a saddle pack or jersey pocket. It has a solid feel that gives the impression that it won't break too easily. Slide the kit open and inside is a glue-free puncture repair kit. This comes with three sticky patches and a tyre boot, all of which can be replaced individually. There was no trouble getting the patches to stick. The pack also comes with a spare chain link and pin.

Paul Norman **26g**

www.i-ride.co.uk

8



LONG TERM TEST

12 months later

Planet X Yorkshire Tour jersey £40

It doesn't seem possible that it's already over a year since the Yorkshire Grand Départ. This jersey has Yorkshire-shaped polka dots and a route profile for stage two across the rear pockets. It's quite light and comfortable, although the quarter zip limits ventilation options. The £40 asking price is a bit steep but it makes a great souvenir.

www.planetx.co.uk

7



A grand design

Can't live without

Velotoze Tall Shoe Cover £14.99

I was initially sceptical about the Velotoze overshoes after struggling to get them over my cycling shoes. They're made of the same stuff as swimming caps — difficult enough to get over a head, let alone a foot. But they've grown on me, particularly since the longer length should provide aero benefits as well as keep my feet dry.

www.velobrands.co.uk

Perfect for rainy evening time trials



BMC GF02

105 £1,800

Tested by: Rob Hoyles | Miles ridden: 234
Size tested: 54cm | Weight: 8.25kg / 18.18lbs

The Spring Classics offer riders a chance to show their resilience over some of the toughest parcours in the world. It provides manufacturers with a similar platform to promote their bikes, while reassuring us that the bike we're buying

is just like the one their man won on. Just as rugged, and equally fast. But let's not get too caught up in the marketing hyperbole. After all, unless you spend most of your time riding in the rain on cobbles for the best part of six hours at a time, then there's very little relevance.

In reality, the GF02 105 is a bike deserving of a place near the top of the shopping list of anyone more interested in cable-tying a number to their bars than they are in pinning one on their back, UCI-approved sticker notwithstanding.

With a designation that denotes 'Gran Fondo' this bike is aimed squarely at sportive and leisure riders looking to cover big distances in comfort, so perhaps a little less Spring Classics, and more Summer Epics.

Frame

As is the norm for endurance (aka sportive) bikes, the head tube is relatively tall — a good 10mm taller than that of its racing stablemate, the SLR. The top tube slopes to allow for this before splitting into what BMC calls the 'Crosslock Connection' — the small bridge between the top tube and the seat tube that's become synonymous with



BMC. This allows a little flex through the rear of the frame to increase comfort and is just one part of BMC's TCC (Tuned Compliance Concept) — an initialism on the chainstays and a theme that runs through the GF02's beautifully engineered carbon-fibre frame.

Other key TCC parts include the slender, flattened seatstays that contrast with the almost industrial chainstays that end with cantilevered dropouts, again designed to help soak up any road vibrations. The BB shell is sizable and not only is it very stiff for decent power transfer, the Shimano BB86 Press-Fit bottom bracket it houses is still silent after more than 200 miles. You'd be surprised how many poorly

engineered frames creak in dismay at the mere mention of a Press-Fit BB. If there's one thing that's assured with BMC, it's build quality.

Specification

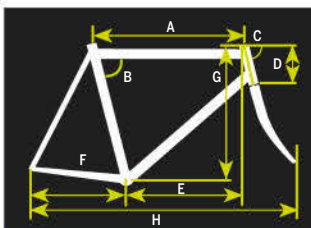
Shimano's excellent 11-speed 105 groupset has been fitted in its entirety. You get the full shebang, including the vastly improved four-spoke chainset and the revised 105 brake calipers — two items that are often ditched in favour of cost-cutting alternatives. Unusually, BMC has decided to route the cables externally. Some might be put off by this, but I'm not one of them — such a clean run to the mechs not only means crisp, clean shifts, it also makes home

BMC GF02 105

£1,800

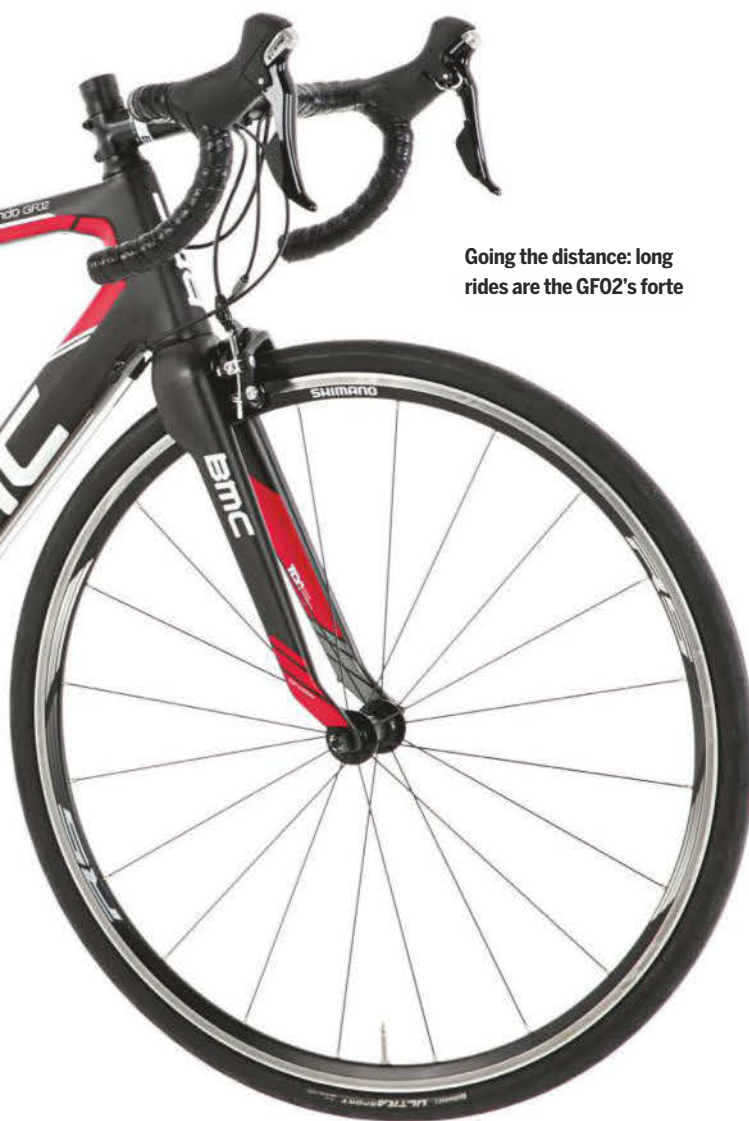
Frame	■■■■■■■■■	9/10
Specification	■■■■■■■■■	8/10
Ride	■■■■■■■■■	8/10
Value	■■■■■■■■■	8/10

Distributor	www.evanscycles.com
Frame	BMC TCC carbon-fibre
Fork	Carbon-fibre
Size range	48, 51, 54, 56, 58, 61
Weight	8.25kg/18/18lb (54)
Groupset	Shimano 105 11-speed
Alterations	Fizik Aliante saddle
Gear ratios	11-32t cassette, 50/34 chainset
Wheels	Shimano RS11
Tyres	Continental Ultra Sport 2 SL 700x28C
Bar	BMC RDB 3
Stem	BMC RST 3
Seatpost	BMC compliancepost, carbon with 18mm offset
Saddle	Selle Royal Saba



SIZE TESTED: 54

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
54.2cm	73.5"	72"	15.9cm	37.5cm	41.2cm	56.3cm	99.3cm



Going the distance: long rides are the GF02's forte



BMC's TTC focuses on rear compliance



Tall head tube aids comfort

back in the game. It's a bike that looks and feels as though it would last a lifetime, and certainly one that deserves the occasional upgrade.

Riding

Having replaced the sumptuous Selle Royal Saba saddle with my preferred Fizik Antares, and the balloon-like 28mm tyres for a set of 23s to get a real feel for the frame, I can confirm that comfort is on a par with any endurance machine I've ridden.

Predictable is a word that suits this bike well, particularly the easy-going, neutral handling. The GF02 gets a raked-out fork that slows the steering slightly and dispatches sketchy, poorly surfaced descents with ease. It's not too bad at going uphill, either, though this is mostly due to the generous gear ratios. Acceleration isn't a strong point and the GF02 isn't a particularly light bike — though in fairness much of that heft lies in the wheelset.

Verdict

While the GF02 boasts little in the way of headline-grabbing statistics, it was still our first choice when it came to picking a real world, sub-£2,000 bike to tackle the Etape du Dales. Reliability is something that's pretty much taken for granted these days, such is the quality of the vast majority of bikes currently on the market. But it seems BMC is able to offer that little bit extra.

Our test bike endured all weathers with not so much as a creak from the bottom bracket or a missed gear shift. Indeed, barely a barrel adjuster has been tweaked during the test period. There's little doubt

that the GF02 is built to last.

If you're a keen sportive rider, or simply a leisure rider looking for a bike that will help you to achieve big things, then the GF02's back-saving geometry and overall ability should put it firmly on your list of bikes to consider.

8

For

- Top quality frameset
- No deviations from the 105 groupset
- Superb long-range comfort

Against

- Wheelset is very heavy
- Saddle is a bit too soft
- Wide 28mm tyres are overkill 90 per cent of the time

maintenance a lot easier — perfect for those racking up big mileages.

The finishing kit is BMC's own and is no frills but well made. The bars and stem combine ergonomics with sufficient rigidity while the proprietary seatpost has been designed to flex in keeping with that TCC theme. Offset is 18mm as standard, though should you prefer, your dealer should be able to equip you with a 3mm or 30mm option.

Shimano's RS11 wheels are fairly basic. There's little more to add other than they're robust and should last reasonably well. My advice

would be to save them for winter training rides and treat yourself to something lighter. The same goes for the 28mm tyres — they're great for awful weather and even worse roads, but frankly a bit OTT the rest of the time. Fit some good quality 25s and you'll enjoy the bike a lot more.

Value

With so many sub-£2,000 bikes on the market offering a superior groupset in the form of Ultegra, it would be easy to dock the GF02 a few points when it comes to value. But the frame and overall finish brings it right

Track pumps

A track pump is an essential bit of kit, and it doesn't have to be a pain to use. Here, *Symon Lewis* tests five

What

Before heading out to any event we check the essentials: bike, wheels, kit and track pump. If the pump is forgotten we're usually scouring the car park asking, "Is that yours? Can I borrow it?" A pump shouldn't take up lots of room, nor be hard to use, and if you're racing a few times a week it'll need to be pretty robust too, especially if every other person is asking to borrow yours.

Why?

A track pump is by far the easiest way (using your own steam) to obtain high or optimum pressure in your tyres. A decent pump will help get to 100psi without sapping too much of your energy, and shouldn't cause any discomfort to your hands or back. A decent valve is key, especially if you don't want your effort wasted or a harder workout from having to hold and pump on your own.

How?

We gathered five pumps at different price points to see whether the high end is worth the money or cheap-and-cheerful does the job just as well. We looked at how many pumps it took to get 100psi, the max psi possible, how well the valve works and how sturdy the pump was.

HOW WE SCORE

- 10 - Superb, best in its class and we couldn't fault it
- 9 - Excellent, a slight change and it would be perfect
- 8 - Brilliant, we'd happily buy it
- 7 - Solid, but there's better out there
- 6 - Pretty good, but not quite hitting the mark
- 5 - Okay, nothing wrong with it, but nothing special
- 4 - A few niggles let this down
- 3 - Disappointing
- 2 - Poor, approach with caution
- 1 - Terrible, do not buy this product

Annihilateair G200A £95

You get what you pay for with the aggressively named Annihilateair G200A, the most expensive pump on test. The name may sound one of Duke Nukem's weapons, but the premium quality aluminium barrel and superb lock-on valves ensured this was the most efficient, requiring only 20 strokes to reach 100psi in a 23mm tyre.

The two way Presta/Schrader valve locks very well and was no trouble to remove without 'air bleed', while the head features a useful bleed valve for letting out measured amounts of air. The base is really solid and stable and this was good at pumping up tubeless tyres too, something some pumps struggle with. Although it performs superbly, you could spend half the money and get a pump that will do the same job. Yet if you are a track rider needing pressures over 150psi, this is worth considering too.

Weight
1,759
grams

9

Strokes to 100psi: 20
Measured: 102psi
Height: 74cm
www.paligap.co



Zefal Profil Max Fp50 with gauge £41.99

The Zefal may not have the stainless steel good looks of the Birzman or Axiom, but that doesn't mean it's any less effective. This is one of the most efficient pumps on test, taking only 21 strokes to get our tyres to 100psi. At least, I think it was 100psi, as the gauge on our test model was a little inconsistent, getting within 5psi of the actual pressure, but rarely proving 100 per cent accurate.

The Zefal lacked the polished finish of some of the others on test; the pressure gauge is large, making it easy to read, but is also a bit unsightly, and the rubber finish on the handle may be functional but doesn't look as nice as the wooden handle on the Birzman. The Zefal wins back points for its compatibility with both Presta and Schrader valves, and it is easy to swap between the two using a red switch on the side of the pump head, which fits nice and securely.

Weight
1,705
grams

7

Strokes to 100psi: 21
Measured: 97psi
Height: 67cm
www.chickencycles.co.uk



GT Track

£24.99

The first thing you notice with this pump is the striking black and yellow colours. Functionally this pump is pretty good, being fairly stable and comfortable to use, despite being relatively small (62cm tall with a hose length of 78cm and a stroke length of 43cm).

The pump has a plastic base and handle (with a nice rubber gripper), and a steel barrel. However, the details on the gauge are difficult to see when in use, but this is largely solved by moving the pointer to the desired psi.

The gauge goes up to 160psi, but GT suggests a maximum of 120psi is achievable. I reached 100psi with 29 strokes, which although higher than the others on test is not a huge stroke count, while the gauge is also very accurate. The connector gives a secure fit, although the locking lever is a little stiff. We only tested the pump using a Presta valve; however, GT says that the connector head works with Schrader valves as well.

Weight
1,123
grams

7

Strokes to 100psi: 29
Measured: 98psi
Height: 62cm
www.cyclingsportsgroup.co.uk



Birzman Maha Apogee III

£54.99

This is a really well designed pump, starting with the snap-on connector. Pull back the gold collar, push the connector over the valve and pull the collar back up, and the pump is securely attached to a Presta valve. If you have a mountain bike it works with Schrader valves and shocks too. The aluminium barrel is tilted at five degrees to the base, which gives a natural pumping motion.

The pump's base is wide and stable and it does not wobble even if held down with one foot. The wooden handle is a nice touch though it does not add much comfort. It took 23 strokes to reach 100psi and the pump's gauge was accurate, measuring 101psi on a dedicated pressure gauge. It's calibrated up to 220psi if you like a firm ride. The hose is long enough to reach the valve when a bike is in a stand and it is secured for transport with a hook.

Weight
1,388
grams

9

Strokes to 100psi: 23
Measured pressure: 101psi
Height: 66cm
www.i-ride.co.uk



Oxford Alloy

£29.99

Although the Oxford pump has a bit of a budget feel to it, it does the job quite well. There's an alloy barrel, but the base and handle are plastic. The gauge is calibrated up to 160psi, although Oxford suggests that the maximum pressure achievable is 120psi.

The gauge is attached about a third of the way up with a short hose, making it easier to read and putting the hose nearer to the valve when the bike is in a stand. The gauge is accurate, with a measured 101psi at a reading of 100psi. The connector head has separate Presta and Schrader adaptors and a lever to lock it to the valve. This is quite stiff, but does ensure a secure fit. In use, the pump feels a bit wobbly due to the two-legged design of the base and the stroke is quite short at 46cm. The handle is also quite narrow, but is comfortable and robust. Additionally, the pump comes with adaptors for airbeds and footballs, and there are three tyre levers in the base — a useful touch.

Weight
960
grams

7

Strokes to 100psi: 24
Measured pressure: 101psi
Height: 66cm
www.oxprod.com



FITNESS

How to... reduce inflammation

Fight inflammation with your fork and reduce your risk of more than sore muscles

Words: Laura Tilt

Described as the response to injury or infection characterised by redness and swelling, inflammation is a hot topic, as studies linking inflammation to disease increase.

Inflammation can be a sign of your body doing its job correctly (e.g. in response to bacterial infection or a sprained limb) but conditions including heart disease, Alzheimer's and cancer have been linked to it and can go unnoticed. Some inflammation can be expected after exercise, but overtraining can lead to chronic inflammation, increasing the risk of injury.

Fight it

An active lifestyle gives you a step up in fighting inflammation — in one study from the *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports*, physically active adults had 33 per cent lower levels of CRP — a marker for inflammation — than the standard couch potato.

Activity aside, the best way to fight inflammation is through your diet, and several

foods have been shown to exert anti-inflammatory effects.

Antioxidants from fruits and vegetables are known inflammation warriors — some of the highest ORAC values (which categorise foods according to their antioxidant capacity) are found in raisins, blueberries, strawberries, grapes, cherries, plums, leafy greens, beetroot and red peppers.

Omega 3 oils found in fatty fish are also helpful. The essential fats inhibit pro-inflammatory hormones triggered by the immune system. If you don't like fish or follow a vegetarian diet, consider an omega 3 supplement.

Similarly, olive oil contains oleocanthal, which shares the same anti-inflammatory pathways as ibuprofen. In a 2013 Canadian study, men and women asked to consume olive oil for 12 weeks had increases in anti-inflammatory markers.

And don't forget to spice up your meals either. Turmeric contains a compound called curcumin, which lowers levels of two enzymes linked with inflammation. The bright yellow spice has been found to reduce joint pain in those who have osteoarthritis.

Essential points

- Inflammation is the body's response to trauma or infection characterised by redness, pain and swelling.
- Uncontrolled inflammation has been linked to an increased risk of cancer and heart disease.
- Your diet can help fight inflammation.

DO eat plenty of brightly coloured fruits and vegetables. Plant flavonoids (components which give plants their colour) have been shown to exert anti-inflammatory effects.

DO stay calm under pressure. Studies show chronic stress is linked with increased levels of the inflammatory marker CRP. Try meditation and deep breathing.

DO limit your intake of fried foods, processed meats, sugar-sweetened drinks and refined carbohydrates — these have been associated with 'pro-inflammatory' effects.


YOU
SAY

Ginger and turmeric are great anti-inflammatory foods. I add them to smoothies and drinks whenever my legs are sore.

Mario Presi

I had a patient with arthritis — after eating more fish, fruit, veg, ginger, turmeric and omega 3, she came off medication.

Mike Sweeney



DO focus on consuming healthy oils from fatty fish, nuts and olive oil. These are linked with reduced levels of inflammation.

DON'T ignore weight issues. Excess body fat plays a role in chronic inflammation, with adipose tissue known to release pro-inflammatory compounds.

DON'T skimp on sleep. Experimental studies show sleep loss is tied with inflammation. Turn off electronic devices and sleep in a dark room to improve your sleeping habits.

After training I do some sort of stretching and consume 20g of protein and carbs if it's an endurance-based session.

Scott Baptie

I was always taking ibuprofen for inflammation but it worried me it wasn't the healthiest option so I try to eat well now instead.

Becky

I always make sure I have lots of grapes and strawberries straight after a ride.

Charlotte Fraser

A nice cold pint of beer always makes my muscles feel better!

Steve Ferry

Things to do this week

Try a Chia Charge Protein Bar

After a long ride it is important to top up your protein stores so your muscles can recover from damage that may have occurred out on the bike. Yorkshire-based Chia Charge has used chia seeds to create this protein bar. Each bar contains 10 grams of protein as well as all the nutritious content that comes with chia seeds. Suitable for vegans, Chia Charge has created a protein snack with a twist.

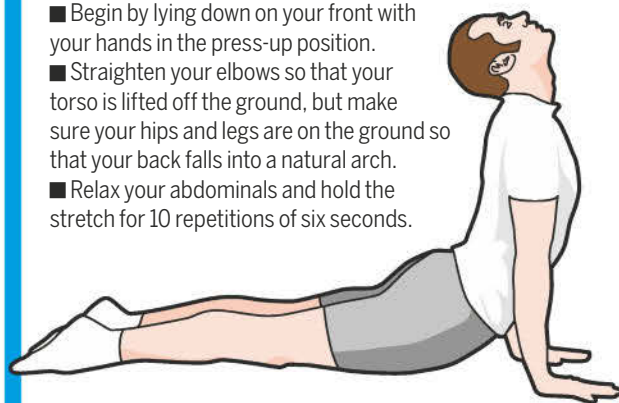
£2 per bar www.chiacharge.co.uk



Stretch out your abdominals

Most cyclists abandon stretching after a ride altogether and even if they do stretch, it usually consists of focusing solely on their leg muscles. However, your abdominal muscles play a huge role in stability and power on the bike, and sometimes need to be stretched after undergoing constant shortening and tightening.

- Begin by lying down on your front with your hands in the press-up position.
- Straighten your elbows so that your torso is lifted off the ground, but make sure your hips and legs are on the ground so that your back falls into a natural arch.
- Relax your abdominals and hold the stretch for 10 repetitions of six seconds.



Eat strawberries

Who said strawberries are just for Wimbledon? They not only taste great but are also crammed full of antioxidants, which are crucial in fighting off illnesses and diseases. They are also a great source of fibre, which will help your digestive system as well. Adding a few strawberries to your cereal or porridge each morning, or having a small container of them to nibble on at work can be the perfect mid-afternoon snack.



Fuelling the world's greatest race

Three weeks, 21 stages, 3,360km, 198 cyclists and a combined burn of 25 million calories — so what exactly goes into fuelling the riders of the Tour de France?



Laura Tilt

Described as one of the most gruelling endurance events on earth, the Tour de France is as nutritionally challenging as it is physical. With riders spending up to six hours a day on the bike with minimal time for recovery and just two rest days over the entire event, feeding the world's greatest riders during a Grand Tour is no mean feat.

"To fuel the journey riders need to consume an average of 5,000-plus calories per stage. Maintaining such a huge energy intake is challenging," says Corinne Mäder, senior sports nutritionist at PowerBar, official sports nutrition partners of the Tour for over a decade.

But it's not just the calories. "Suppression of appetite and meal fatigue due to eating the same food every day for weeks must also be managed," adds Mäder.

"Gastro-intestinal problems can also occur, especially during the latter part of the race, and sports nutrition products and food must therefore be selected carefully and tailored to the individual rider."

Couple this with eating on the bike, ensuring adequate hydration and recovery, moving between hotels and the sheer length of the Tour and you've got a mammoth task on your hands. So how exactly is it done?

The prep

Nutrition groundwork starts months before the race in the pursuit of leanness — when you're competing at the top, even small changes to body weight count. 2014 race winner Vincenzo Nibali may have joked about his pre-Tour weight loss struggle, but both the Italian rider and his team doctor openly credited his success to attaining his optimal race weight of 64 kilograms.

This kind of story isn't uncommon as riders constantly monitor their diet in a bid to reach their optimal weight, where they are as light as possible without losing power through reduced muscle mass.

As well as achieving peak body composition, riders must train their digestive system to consume the large quantities of sugary gels, bars and drinks they will need every day. Similar rules apply for hydration — sweat losses are measured during training to calculate the volumes of fluid required, allowing drinking strategies to be established.

The calories

The most important nutritional consideration for riders is getting enough calories to meet the extreme demands of the race.

"Suppression of appetite and meal fatigue due to eating the same food every day for three weeks must be managed"

This can be anything from 5,000 calories a day on a flat stage to 7,000 calories on a hilly stage.

Guzzling around 6,000 calories a day might sound blissful, but the reality of consuming such huge quantities of food day in, day out for three weeks presents one of the biggest challenges for the riders.

"Nutrient-dense foods are needed to remove the bulk of large volumes of food, to make it easier for riders to maintain energy balance and get enough nutrients," says Mäder.

So bulky salads and vegetables are swapped for fresh fruit and vegetable juices, and carbohydrate powders are stirred into food and drink to increase calories.

The amount of food needed is close to the body's maximum capacity for digestion, so failure to keep up with the enormous calorie intake can spell disaster, because playing catch-up is near impossible. And ending up in calorie deficit is a no-no because riders risk losing precious muscle.

The carbs

Because the body relies on glucose for energy during hard exercise, a high proportion of the calories consumed by riders come from carbohydrate — around 70 per cent, or 1,100g a day for a 70kg rider, according to Emma Barraclough, senior sports nutritionist at SiS. "Carbohydrate is needed for high-intensity efforts, such as breakaways and tough climbs," explains Barraclough.

Swallowed in drinks, bars, gels, and stirred into drinks, riders consume around 250 calories or 60g of carbohydrate per hour. "Riders take in energy little and often — 36g of carbohydrate from their drink every hour with a gel or bar every 30 minutes as well," says Barraclough.

During the longest stages, carbohydrate intake can jump to

80 or 90g per hour — but the key is to start early. "If riders don't fuel and drink properly, they will not be in contention

when it comes to the critical part and finale of a stage," says Pete Slater, co-founder of OTE Sports.

"Riders start taking drink, food and gels on board as soon as they get going."

Food logistics

Food consumed during the race needs to be portable and easy to consume on the bike. Riders start with food and gels in their jerseys, picking up additional supplies from musettes, packed by soigneurs at the start of each day.

"A typical musette bag may contain two 500ml bottles of electrolyte drink for hydration and fuel, an energy bar to eat when the pace is less intense, and isotonic gels with caffeine for that extra lift when needed," says Barraclough.

"There's also a small sandwich and/or rice cake to keep the hunger pangs at bay, and to help with variety and texture on long stages," she continues. ▶

Bars and sandwiches are kept for the flat stages, with gels and drinks used on climbs as it's more difficult to take on food then. Bottles with a sports drink and three gels taped on are picked up from team cars, with sandwiches and gels available from support teams on the side of the road.

Food consumed off the bike is just as important. Most teams travel with their own nutritionist and chef, a practice that has helped improve the quality of food and prevents one of the biggest blights of the high calorie regime — food fatigue. The chef and nutritionist work together to plan menus, taking into account rider preferences, with some requiring gluten or lactose-free meals.

According to Team Sky's chef Søren Kristiansen, the team's main dishes are always served with two gluten-free sides.

Judith Haudum, sports nutritionist to the BMC Racing Team says: "If riders can't find something they like then they don't eat enough."

Hydration

Avoiding dehydration is another challenge — sweat losses can be in excess of three litres during hard stages, and riders may need to consume up to 10 litres a day to maintain fluid balance.

Fluid is lost through sweat and breath, and losses are exacerbated

in the heat. But it's not just fluid — electrolytes such as sodium and potassium also need to be replaced to avoid the risk of hyponatremia, or low sodium levels, a potentially fatal condition that can be caused by overdrinking plain water.

"The sodium content in an electrolyte drink is crucial in helping the riders keep fluid balance in their body. Up to a litre an hour can be lost in the heat at altitude in the mountains," explains Barraclough.

Hydration starts at breakfast when riders drink fresh fruit or vegetable juice. Taking on fluids then becomes an all-day task whether the riders are on their bikes or not.

Recovery

After each stage recovery takes precedence, with the priority on replenishing glycogen stores and helping muscles recover as quickly as possible.

Most teams drum into their riders the importance of the nutritional 20-minute 'golden window', which starts as soon as exercise stops.

Recovery involves three parts: carbohydrate, protein and fluid. A cyclist's body needs carbohydrates to replenish depleted glycogen stores, high-quality protein for repairing the damaged muscle tissue and fluid plus electrolytes for effective rehydration.

Daily nutritional needs of a TdF rider

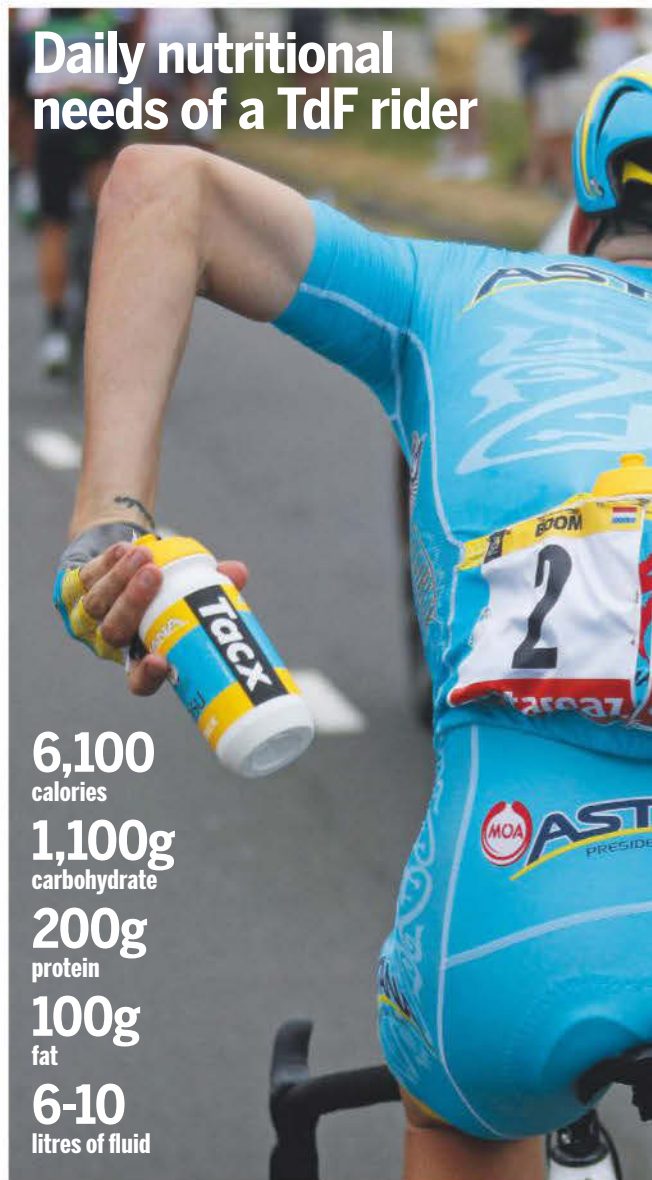
6,100
calories

1,100g
carbohydrate

200g
protein

100g
fat

6-10
litres of fluid



Diet of a Tour rider

From morning muesli to a sundown shake, here's what a Tour de France rider can expect to eat each day on the race.

09:00 Breakfast

Riders have their breakfast around three hours before the race — carbohydrate-rich foods like bread, muesli, cereal, fruit, coffee, smoothies, orange juice and even noodles help top up glycogen stores.

"One thing all riders avoid is eating heavy food," says Judith Haudum, sports nutritionist to the BMC race team.

"They have to resist the enticing pastries from the hotel breakfast bar because this type of food isn't fully digested in time for

the start, making riders' stomachs feel uncomfortably heavy."

10:30 Pre-race snack

Transfers from hotels to stage starts can be long, offering an opportunity to top up carbohydrate and calories — typically, rice cakes with honey, raisin bread or a sports bar are consumed with fluid. Studies show Tour riders are consuming less on the bike (possibly due to more aggressive racing), meaning greater reliance on pre- and post-race nutrition.

12:00 During the race

Different stages at the Tour require different fuelling strategies, according to duration,

intensity and temperature. Fat metabolism can be utilised during mid-stage low intensity periods when a rider can shelter in the bunch and get towed along. In contrast, tougher stages will see the body rely on carbohydrate, which means more gels and bars.

Solid foods consumed on the bike include small rolls with jam, rice cakes and energy bars. Quick-to-consume gels — especially caffeinated ones — will provide the majority of calories as the pace increases as riders will struggle to chew and swallow solids.

Stage 18 at this year's Tour de France features three category-two climbs and one *hors catégorie* ascent over 186km in the Alps. On these climbs alone SiS expects its riders to consume six electrolyte drinks, three energy



Riders drinking cans of cola is a familiar sight, but due to the importance of both protein and carbohydrate during recovery, a shake is a more likely option for pro riders. “Trek Factory Racing no longer give their riders cola at the finish, knowing it doesn’t contain the carbs and protein needed immediately afterwards,” says Barraclough. “Instead they have a recovery drink ready to go from their soigneurs.”

As training techniques and bike design advance, so do the nutritional products that support the riders. “Research findings are translated into practical application — not just the ingredients but

also factors such as mouth feel, taste, packaging and application — for example, how easy a product is to open and consume during a ride,” says Mäder.

Many transportable carb-based products such as PowerBar’s C2Max contain multiple forms of sugars (glucose plus fructose) which help riders absorb and use more carbohydrate per hour than conventional nutrition products,

maximising delivery to the working muscles.

Caffeine is one of the only legal performance-boosting aids available, and riders will take a caffeine gel before the start of the race.

“It helps lower the perception of effort,” says Barraclough, “so it can be useful on a long hilly day.”

Nitrates relax blood vessels, improving blood flow, which can translate to improvement in performance.

“Nitrate gels are often taken at breakfast time to help riders lower the oxygen cost of their efforts,” reports Barraclough.

Isotonic gels’ concentration of particles mimic that of blood plasma,

increasing the rate of transportation to the muscle.

“Our gels deliver energy twice as fast as other gels,” claims Barraclough.

Multi-day racing batters immune function, but probiotics can bolster the body’s defenses. “Probiotic drinks are also used to aid immune function, as the rider’s body will naturally be under a lot of stress,” explains Slater. ■

“If riders can’t find something they like then they don’t eat enough”

Judith Haudum,
sports nutritionist,
BMC Racing Team

bars, two isotonic gels and a caffeine gel; more if the heat ramps up.

17:00 Post-race recovery

As soon as the stage ends, recovery begins. “Recovery drinks with carbohydrate and 25g of protein are waiting for the riders as soon as they finish a stage, which they drink whilst cooling down,” says Slater. Depending on how long the transfer is, riders shower and change in the bus before eating a snack prepared by the team chef — sandwiches, rich cakes and cereal bars are standard fare.

20:00 Evening meal

Post-massage evening meals start with salad, soup or juice for a nutrient boost, followed by

meat or fish and carbohydrate-rich foods — but gone are the days of overcooked pasta. Last year, Garmin’s chef Sean Fowler tweeted photos of flaxseed crusted turkey and pumpkin soup, while Team Sky’s Søren Kristiansen served up halibut with apple, peach and fennel salsa. The aim is to use colourful foods to encourage riders to eat and keep them nourished while avoiding food repetition. Homemade cakes, yoghurt, fruit and flans are often served for dessert.

23:00 Lights out

Carbohydrate-rich snacks like small cakes, fruit, nuts and cereal ensure glycogen levels are constantly being topped up after dinner. Hydration is also an ongoing struggle and it’s rare to see a rider without a bidon in their hand.

TdF nutrition in numbers

Overall consumption*

13,700

Energy bars

15,400

Gels

8,000+

litres Sports Drink

530

recovery shakes

*data provided by Powerbar

Totals per team:

Team LottoNL-

Jumbo*

1,250

gels

300

energy bars

800

energy drinks

180

servings recovery shakes

*data provided by OTE sports

Totals per rider*

100,000

calories burnt

95

race drinks

47

energy bars

25

isotonic gels

21

caffeine gels

21

recovery drinks

*data provided by SiS nutrition

Eileen Roe: My week in training

National crit champion Eileen Roe takes *Cycling Weekly* through a week of her training during a busy week of crit racing

Date: June 1-7, 2015 | Location: Fife, Scotland

After an impressive 2014 season, which saw her claim the National Circuit Race Championships and the overall in the Matrix Fitness GP, as well as represent Scotland on the road and track at the Commonwealth Games, Eileen Roe is now racing for pro team Wiggle-Honda. Playing an important role in the team's dominance during the Australian crit season earlier in the year, Roe is now based back in Scotland and makes trips to the Continent to race.

We spoke to Roe during a tough week of racing and training set out by her coach, former Scottish Commonwealth Games medallist James McCallum. Unfortunately, since we spoke, Roe broke her hand, which ruled her out of racing at the National Road Race Championships. However, she is hoping to recover in time to defend her national crit title in July.

Monday

Two and a half hours, I just cycled to a Scottish Institute doctor's appointment in Stirling for a check-up. I was ill last week and off the bike, so was getting the all-clear to get back in to it. I rode 62km.

WE
SAY

Roe uses her doctor's appointment to get her training in today. With just a steady two-and-a-half-hour ride she keeps her legs ticking over while ensuring she's fully recovered from being ill. This is important as she has a tough week of racing and training ahead — it's easy for riders to start training too hard too soon when recovering from an illness, which could prolong the problem. Two and a half hours may seem like a long ride if you only ride a few hours a week, but for a full-time rider with plenty of time for rest in between this is quite normal for an easy day.

Tuesday

This was a hard day in the saddle, with a two hour 45 minute ride, including four zone three power efforts at 90rpm for 15 minutes, and 15 minutes' recovery between each effort. This was a proper windy day where at one point I was doing 16kph sitting near the end of my zone three power!

WE
SAY

Zone three efforts are about focusing on improving power sustainability around tempo pace. This was particularly hard for Roe today due to the conditions. The wind would have slowed her right down and made the efforts seem uncharacteristically hard. An hour's worth of

Eileen Roe

- Age: 25
- Rides for: Wiggle-Honda
- Discipline: road
- Best Results: national crit champion 2014, overall winner Matrix Fitness GP Series 2014



these efforts broken down into 15 minutes would help maintain a base endurance, which can sometimes be neglected at this time of year. This also demonstrates why power is a better tool for training than speed.

Wednesday

The aim of this session was to “focus on short, sharp climbs, don't just sit in the saddle. Aim for zone four power up climbs and be explosive. Once over the climb press on in zone three/four for two minutes”. There's a hilly area locally in the next village, called Culross, and there's a cobbled climb which turns into tarmac towards the end. I did the climbing efforts four times with 10-minutes' rest between efforts included in a circuit. In total I was riding for two hours, 40 minutes and did 70k including 1,000 metres of climbing.

WE
SAY

Roe's local area is perfect for this session with short, steep climbs similar to the bergs of Belgium, and she uses a circuit to complete the four climbing efforts her coach, James McCallum, set her. These specific efforts are a great way to get used to pushing over the top of a climb even when slightly gassed from the climb itself. Staying in zone four for these efforts helps to improve a rider's threshold and prepares them for the type of efforts they do during races.

Thursday

Two hours in the morning with light and fast cruising, keeping the load light before racing later that evening.

I raced the brilliantly organised local crit called Squirrel Crit, which was 40 minutes plus five laps — the course incorporated two cobbled sections and two climbs. I did a 20-minute warm-up on the rollers before. In the end I attacked halfway through the race



The Wiggle-Honda rider is the British national circuit race champion

and only Charline Joiner was able to come with me. Unfortunately, I didn't win this local race; I came second.

Friday

A recovery day doing just 30 minutes on the rollers spinning my legs, stretching and foam rolling.

WE SAY

An easy two-hour ride on Thursday keeps Roe feeling loose and ready before her race in the evening.

Keeping high cadence and using low gears will help remove any metabolic waste from her previous day's efforts while not stressing her legs. After riding aggressively and leading for the majority of the final lap, Roe was beaten in the final sprint.

Friday was a recovery day after the last few hard days of training and racing. Stretching and foam rolling help to release any tightness and reduce muscle soreness.

Saturday

Went on the rollers for an hour before breakfast then caught the train from Edinburgh to London Kings Cross. I did a roller warm-up before the race. Fortunately, I overcame two crashes in this race and won the sprint for second place — my first podium at the London Nocturne.

Sunday

I raced another two crits at the Tour of Hertfordshire series as I tagged along with the Neon Velo team who were looked after

me this weekend. The organiser kindly let me race both the women's and the men's 2,3,4 cat that day. I won the women's and got a good result in the men's. Overall I did one and a half hours' racing today.

WE SAY

Roe had a very race-heavy weekend, riding three crit races in total. Despite crashing in the Nocturne she still managed to pick up an impressive second place. Similarly she had two good results on the Sunday. With four races altogether during the week it shows how hard it can be to not overdo things at this time of year. Roe uses the rollers as well as doing easy rides to keep her legs ticking over and recover from the previous day's training or racing without overdoing things.

Women: steel yourself!

Heavy strength training effective for women's cycling performance

It might sound counterintuitive, but there's increasing evidence that heavy strength training focused on the lower body can bring about improvements in cycling performance. These include the ability to use oxygen more efficiently while pedalling (increased cycling economy) and increases in maximum sustainable power output. However, virtually all of the previous studies have used male cyclists as subjects, which begs the question: does strength training improve cycling performance in female cyclists too?

To try to answer this, Norwegian researchers have investigated the effect of adding heavy strength training to well-trained female cyclists' normal endurance training on cycling performance. For 11 weeks, 19 female cyclists were randomly assigned to one of two groups:

- Endurance-only training, where the cyclists simply rode as normal.
- Endurance plus strength, where

the cyclists rode as normal but also added in heavy weight training exercises for the lower body, such as leg presses.

Before and after the 11-week trial, both groups underwent testing to assess fitness and cycling performance.

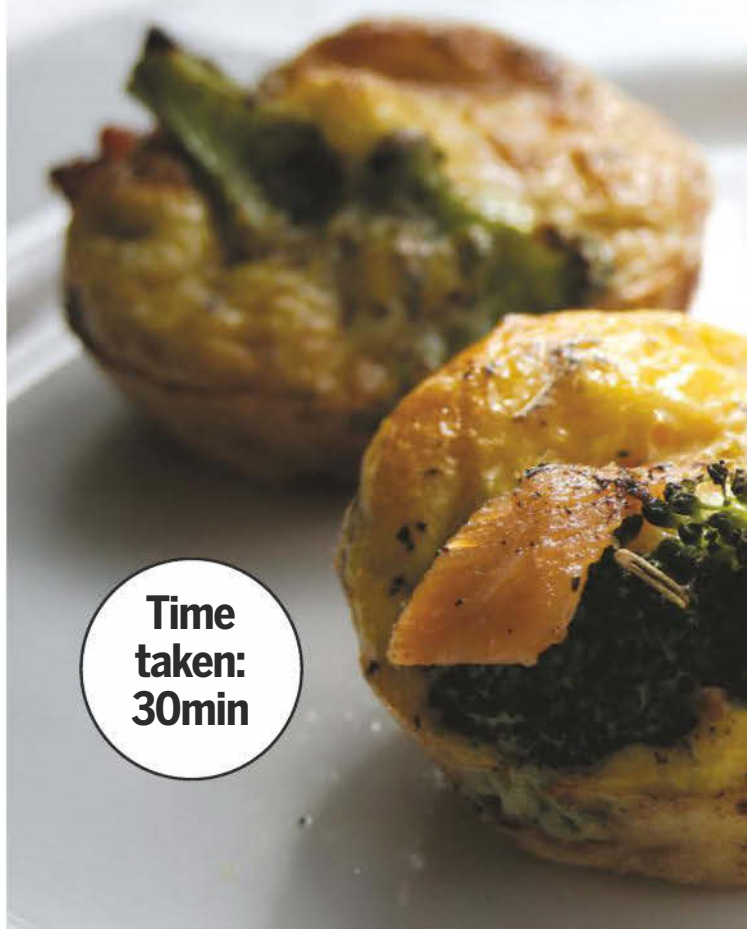
Results showed cyclists in the combined strength and endurance group increased their one-repetition maximum performance in the leg press, and showed an increase in the size of their quadriceps (frontal thigh) muscles — neither of which was observed in the endurance-only group. Additionally, the strength plus endurance cyclists also improved their average power output during a 40-minute, all-out time trial and were able to sustain a higher proportion of the maximum oxygen uptake — both of which are key measures of endurance performance.

Scand J Med Sci Sports. 2015 Apr 18. [Epub ahead of print]

Great for...

pre-ride fuelling

Smoked salmon & broccoli muffins



Time
taken:
30min



Photo: fotolia

METHOD:

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
2. Grease a cake tray with organic raw coconut oil.
3. Whisk together the organic raw coconut oil and eggs then season.
4. Place a small piece of broccoli into each muffin case, followed by salmon and dill.
5. Pour the egg mixture over and bake for 20 minutes.

NUTRITION PER SERVING:**3g**
Sugar**8g**
Fat**3g**
Sat fat**0.5g**
Salt

The summer is here and what better way to heat things up than with a selection of summer recipes for you to try? This week why not give these smoked salmon and broccoli muffins a go? These high-protein delights are a perfect pre-ride breakfast. Make a few more, and you'll have a post-ride protein punch waiting for your muscles when you get home.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1tsp organic raw coconut oil, melted
- 5 eggs, whisked
- Himalayan salt and ground black pepper to season
- ½ small broccoli head, chopped
- 50g smoked salmon
- Handful of fresh dill

TAKE HOME TRAINING SESSION**Two-in-one session**

This week's session is ideal for time-crunched riders looking to add variety to their sessions without adding duration

This session is perfect if you are short on time but still want variety in your training sessions. This 60-minute session

includes riding at a prolonged intense 'sweetspot' effort just below your anaerobic threshold, whilst also improving your maximal sustainable power.

Start the session with a 10-minute warm-up, and then ride just below your anaerobic threshold for a 20-minute period. It's important not to ride above this so lactic acid doesn't form in your muscles before the intense

effort intervals. Following the anaerobic threshold segment, complete five sets of three-minute intervals that are split into

one minute and two minute segments. The one-minute segment should be ridden at your maximal intensity, before gently spinning for the remaining two minutes of the three-minute interval. Once you've done this session a few times, increase the number of three-minute intervals. Finish off with a 15-minute cool-down to clear any lactic acid that may have built up during the high intensity one-minute bursts. Stick to your training zones and results will follow.

Time taken:
60 mins

Time (minutes)	Zone
0-10	1-2
10-30	4
30-31	5
31-33	2
33-34	5
34-36	2
36-37	5
37-39	2
39-40	5
40-42	2
42-43	5
43-45	2
45-60	1

Effort	You can	It feels like you're...	Use it for...	% Max heart rate	% FT power
Easy Zone 1	Chat freely	Warming up	Warm-ups, cool-downs and recovery	60-65%	56-75%
Steady Zone 2	Speak one sentence at a time	Riding along in the bunch on the flat	Long rides	65-75%	76-90%
Brisk Zone 3	Speak a few words at a time	Breathing deeply and working hard	Long efforts of 10-20min	75-82%	91-105%
Hard Zone 4	Say only one word at a time	Really attacking (perhaps on a climb)	Efforts lasting 2-8min	82-89%	106-120%
Very hard Zone 5	Grun and gasp	Sprinting	Efforts lasting less than 2min	89%-MHR	121%+

The Skye Mor

CW
Difficulty
rating:
8/10

**This
year's
event:
Aug 29**

**95
miles**

**2,050
metres
ascent**

Trevor Ward reports from one of the UK's most remote sportive locations

One of the most visited sites on the Isle of Skye is a 50-metre high pinnacle of rock called the Old Man of Storr.

Legend has it that the old man in question was turned to stone after witnessing something no man should have to see.

Whether that was a carload of Italian tourists failing to understand the concept of passing places on the road below isn't recorded, but this scenario is worth bearing in mind as you begin the Skye Mor sportive.

Where is it?

On the Isle of Skye, a wild and windswept outcrop of jagged mountains, beautiful lochs, spectacular rock formations and epic, sweeping landscapes. But it's worth bearing in mind that to get there involves a five-hour drive — even from Glasgow — and the nearest airport, Inverness, is three hours away.

Why ride it?

Skye was voted the "fourth best island in the world" by *National Geographic* magazine because of its wild beauty. The route reflects this, taking riders across stunning landscapes. And while the roads aren't closed, they are largely empty. It is challenging with plenty of climbs, but without anything excessively long or steep.

History

The Skye Mor — and its shorter companion the Skye Beag (48 miles) — were established in 2010 by Highland company Hands On Events. Because the number of riders is in the hundreds rather than thousands, the latter stages can feel "more like a time trial" according to one previous entrant.



How to enter

Entry fee is £39. www.handsonevents.co.uk

HQ details

Even from Glasgow or Edinburgh it is a five-hour drive to reach the town of Portree. The nearest airport, Inverness (served by EasyJet and FlyBe), is a three-hour drive away, and the nearest rail station, Kyle of Lochalsh (trains from Inverness only), still leaves you with a 45-minute drive.

Where to stay

Places are limited in Portree itself, but there is plenty of accommodation scattered around the rest of the island. We recommend the Tables Guest House in Dunvegan, a 30-minute drive from the start and offering secure bike storage and a drying room. Elsewhere, a wide choice of accommodation can be found at www.isleofskye.com.

Where to eat

The Dunvegan Hotel for quality pub grub or the upmarket Old School Restaurant, for its very gamey gourmet menu. Situated between the two is Jann's Cakes, where incredible things are done with Belgian chocolate and the local Talisker whisky.

Local bike shop

Skye's only bike shop offering repairs is Island Cycles in Portree, open 9-5, closed Sundays.



The first 30 miles are on single-lane roads where the passing places are the only things stopping the local economy from grinding to a literal and figurative halt. Caution is therefore advised, especially as you pass in the shadow of the Old Man after just six miles.

Before that, however, your senses will already have been jolted by the start from Portree — it's an uphill slog for the first three miles. This sets the pattern for the rest of the day. While never reaching the heights of a more mountainous sportive, this event still packs a punch with its relentlessly rolling parcours.

By the end of the ride, you will have accumulated as much elevation as if you'd spent a few hours in the Alps.

From Staffin and the first of four feed stations, the road lurches up towards the distinctive ridge of rocks called the Quiraing, where the opening scenes of *Alien* prequel *Prometheus* were filmed. The route hugs the coast, threading its way through outcrops of basalt — shaped like giant jelly moulds — before spilling downhill, seemingly towards the end of the world — the exposed, desolate tip of the Trotternish peninsula.

As the road snakes past the ruins of Duntulm Castle, you are confronted with the first serious climb since the start (a mile long, four per cent slog). You will more than likely also be heading into the prevailing south-westerly wind, adding to the attritional

toll of the undulating route. The descent into the ferry port of Uig, and the site of the second feed station, is down a series of hairpins and about as Alpine as the route gets. Weather permitting, you'll also catch your first glimpse of the Cuillins, a range of jagged mountain peaks that dominate the horizon.

From Uig (and all the way to the finish) you are back on a two-lane road — watch out for goods vehicles that may have just arrived on the ferry from the Isle of Harris. There's a succession of draggy uphill before you reach the 45-mile mark and a sharp right turn for the road to Dunvegan.

From the plateau overlooking Dunvegan you'll get views of MacLeod's Tables — two striking, flat-topped rock formations on the other side of the loch. In Dunvegan itself there is a feed station — or you can really top up your caloric deficit at Jann's Cakes — before the road bumps along towards the picturesque bay at Bracadale.

Then, just when you think you've cracked it, come the two longest climbs since Portree

at five miles and three miles respectively. But the gradient is steady and the reward is a spectacular panoramic view of the Cuillins.

At Sligachan it might be worth grabbing a banana and a drink at the final feed station as there is a two-mile uphill drag along the island's busiest road before the final seven miles back to Portree. ■

ORGANISER'S TARGET TIMES

Route	Distance	Ave speed	Time
Skye Beag	48miles	12mph	4hrs
Skye Beag	48miles	15mph	3hrs 12min
Skye Beag	48miles	18mph	2hrs 40min
Skye Mor	95miles	12mph	7hrs 55min
Skye Mor	95miles	15mph	6hrs 20min
Skye Mor	95miles	18mph	5hrs 17min

The challenges

1 Bosville Terrace-Staffin Road

What the climb out of Portree lacks in steepness it makes up for in length. By the top you will have over three miles in your legs — quite an ask from a standing start.

2 Duntulm climb

After 25 miles comes the first serious climb. It's also likely that you will have just turned into a headwind but take heart — the gradient is shallow and steady, and the views are superb.

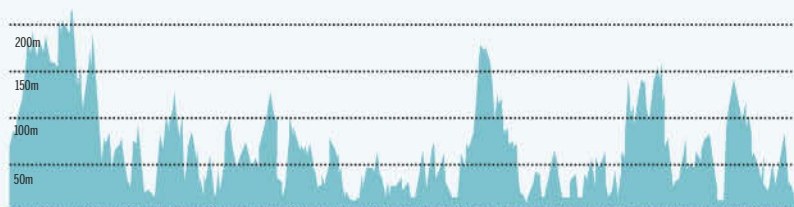
3 Edinbane climb

This four-mile drag traverses bleak moorland, but you are well over halfway now, and a feed station and great views of MacLeod's Tables await you on the other side.

NAIL IT

4 Bracadale climb at 75 miles

With just over 20 miles left, you arrive at the longest climb of the day. Worse, it's quite a grippy surface, and the long, straight stretches can be disheartening. So spin up in the small ring as it's a five-mile slog (with occasional false flats) and you've still got two other (shorter) climbs before the finish. Enjoy the spectacular views of Loch Harport to your right. At the top, the best descent of the route awaits you and the final feed station at the Sligachan Hotel is only eight miles away.



Cleveland Wheelers

Simon Schofield gets a warm welcome from a club who pride themselves on being a broad church

If you'd played the word association game using 'cycling club' as the trigger 10 years ago, or even five, it might not be unreasonable to think that responses might have included 'snooty', 'elitist' or 'unapproachable'.

As riders stream into the ridiculously pretty North Yorkshire village of Great Ayton, Cleveland Wheelers' Dave Kirton tells me: "I'm not saying we were like that, far from it. But we were dying, with numbers for the club run down as low as eight or 10 riders. So three or four years ago we decided to modernise the club."

Judging by the numbers piling in on a blustery and grey Sunday morning, it's worked. I lose count at 80 plus, and by the time wheels

roll, it's over 100. "It's a bit like *Songs of Praise*," one mischievous member tells me later: "An empty church till the TV cameras turn up."

Humorous, but maybe a little harsh as the club's membership is up from 170 three years ago to 318 today and New Cleveland Wheelers, as Kirton calls it, is thriving. "The club run is the beating heart and soul," says committee member Steve Tilly, as we divide up into three groups. The fast lads will be through and off, the medium group is aiming for around 16mph and the Steady Eddies, a mix of the newbies and the older and wiser, will almost certainly beat us all back to the cafe.

As we clip in I ask what form the modernisation has taken. "The general upsurge

in cycling has helped, for sure," says Kirton. "But social media is just brilliant for organising rides and we've started using that more, as well as introducing online membership on the website. That makes it so easy to join."

There's been a bit of canny marketing too. Themed rides, run by member Paul Christon, let people know what they're getting and add a bit of novelty. Retro rides on old bikes, challenge rides with a distance or ascent target, fixed-wheel rides and even a Chimney Challenge (the notorious Rosedale Chimney with its 33 per cent gradient is on the Wheelers' patch) have all proved popular.

And speaking of their patch, I'm increasingly knocked out by the scenery. A flat plain, bordered by the looming,

Club facts

Based: Great Ayton, North Yorkshire

Members: 318

Formed: 1958

Meets: Sunday and Tuesday (summer) club runs. Saturday socials. Thursday evening TT series (6.40pm).

heather-clad Cleveland Hills and a succession of chocolate box villages with our route grazing the North York Moors National Park, all scream 'hidden gem'. Bits of it were revealed in the Tour de Yorkshire's first stage, which saw 100 Cleveland Wheelers riders gather at one climb to roar on member Harry Tanfield, riding for JLT-Condor. "I think that turnout showed just how healthy the club is," says chairman Mike Cole, as we ready ourselves for the steep pitch of Scarth Nick, which rears up at 20 per cent in some sections.

There's a regroup at the top with ride leaders making sure stragglers are back on — and it sums up the genuine friendliness of the club, epitomising the best aspects of the traditional club run. ▶

History

Cleveland Wheelers was formed in 1958 when a group of like-minded cyclists broke away from the Redcar section of the CTC to pursue their interests in racing as opposed to touring.

The club's first secretary, Frank Lindstrom, now sadly deceased, got the job "largely because he owned a typewriter," says the Wheelers' first president, Dave Holden, who still holds the vice president position. Local bike shop owner Bill Beattie became a patron and sponsor, donating prizes and trophies for the club's growing weekly series of 10s. A particular

favourite was the Christmas morning 10, which was timed to finish as the pubs opened.

A club BAR trophy followed and in a nod to its roots, a Tourist Trophy competition saw entrants compete over distances like 250 miles in 24 hours. The club recognised the importance of a junior section, which flourished in the 1960s.

Although the club has now moved with the times with an impressive website, it still publishes the Cleveland Wheelers Spokesman newsletter, now 32 years old and on its 127th issue.

Achievements

■ Rising star on the domestic pro scene Harry Tanfield, riding for JLT-Condor, is a Cleveland Wheelers Member. Fifth in U23 National TT Championships in 2014.

■ Brother Charlie Tanfield, who rides with Easton Ritte road team, came fourth in Junior Road Race National Champs 2014.

■ Former member Geoff Robinson, Yorkshire BAR and fourth in National BAR 2003.

■ Andrew Jackson, silver medal winner in Junior Road Race National Champs. Seventh in 2005 National RR Champs.

■ Dan Smith, national junior points race silver medal and Youth Olympics rider in 1996.

■ Philip West, national track champ and GB International.





Cleveland Wheelers

Ride highlights

1 Great Ayton is the start and finish point of many rides for the club and it's a charmingly picturesque village with several good coffee shops for a pre-ride cuppa.

2 The lanes between Ingleby Greenhow and Swainby are perfect roll-out territory, with smooth surfaces, high hedges for shelter and a couple of rollers to wake the legs.

3 Swainby sees the turn up into the Cleveland Hills, with steep, hairpin turn pitches up to a plateau bordering Cod Beck reservoir with big views across Teesside.

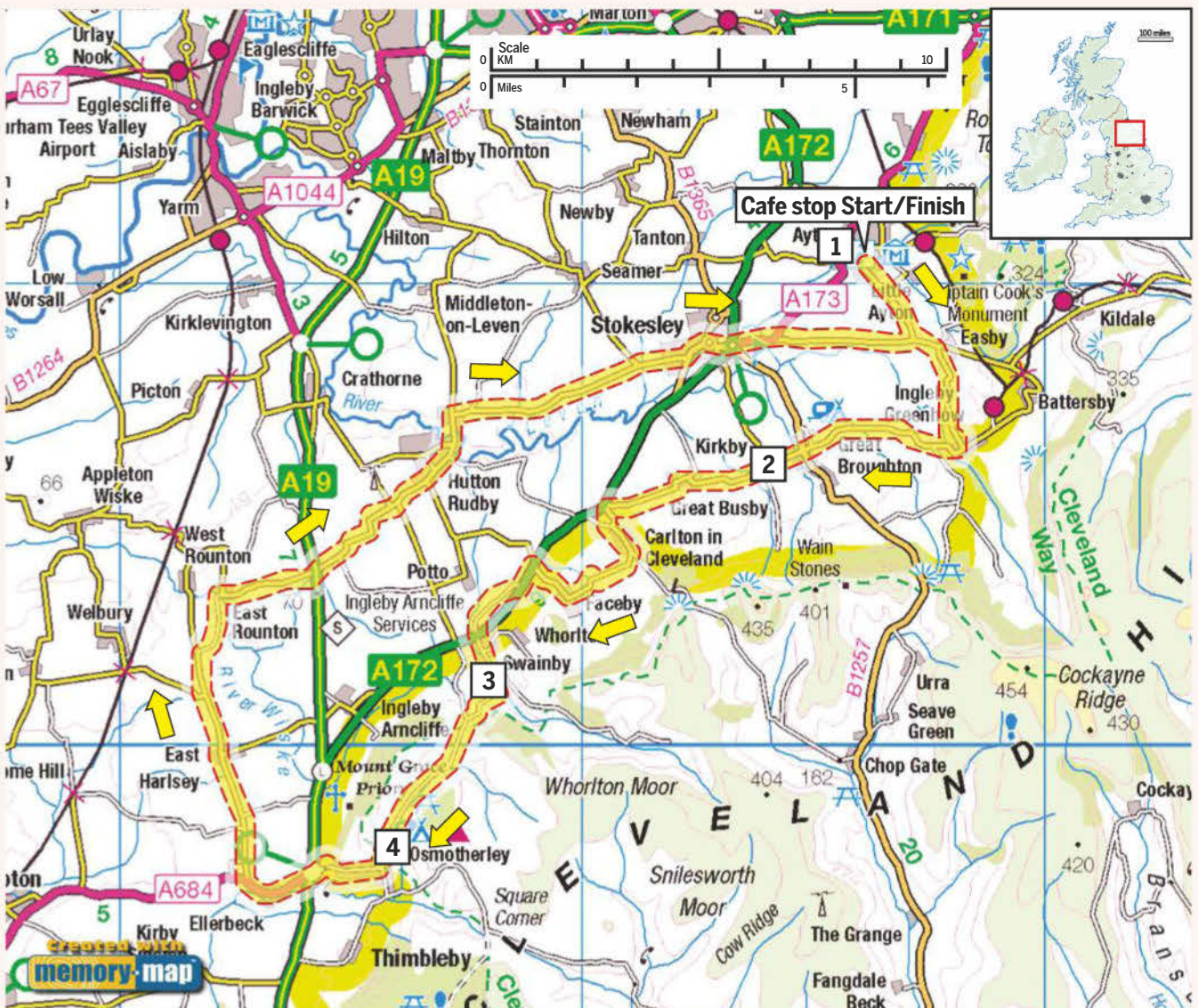
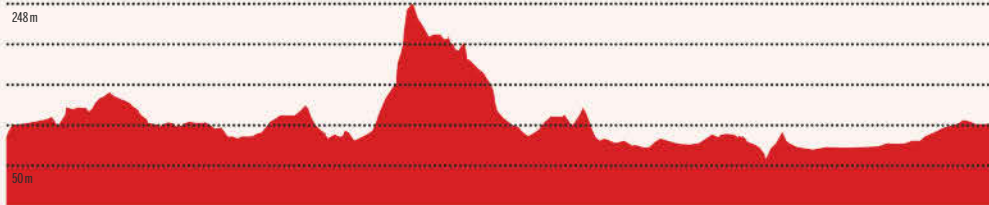
4 The turn for homes Osmotherley, another beautiful village with lots of food and drink options and into Stokesley, a pretty market town.

Favourite cafe

Fletchers Farm Cafe, Great Ayton, TS9 6HZ, 01642 723846
Excellent, and very large, farm cafe with superb cakes and proper coffee. Huge outdoor area for bike parking.

Chapters Deli, Stokesley, TS9 5DG, 01642 714692
Billed as a bistro and wine bar but doubling up as a cyclist-friendly fuelling stop in the lovely market town.

Castleton Tea Rooms, Whitby, YO21 2EG, 01287 660135
A target for longer rides, the tea rooms welcome cyclists and specialise in local produce.





Coffee stops are Cleveland's bread and butter

Meet the club



Michael Storey: "I love the camaraderie of the club. I've made some really good friends."



Kay Stokes: "I've learned such a lot about riding with others. I've had great advice."



OK, let's get this chaingang sorted...



Lining up for the best cake in town



...I'm with the laughing group



Mike Cole: "This club is more about riding than racing."



Shaun Joughin: "There's a core group which keeps things going. We've built up by being friendly."

There's more to the Wheelers than the Sunday club run, however. The club makes use of the nearby Prissick Circuit to train up youngsters; there's a very active TT side, a new Tuesday night ride has proved

a magnet for new members and a programme to recruit and train ride leaders has, Kirton is sure, increased general attendance on club runs. There are even plans for a nocturne and there's also a hill-climb series.

But the lasting impression I'm left with as we unclip for cake and coffee at a farm shop cafe is the warmth of the welcome, the pride in the club and the friendliness of its members. Long live the New Cleveland Wheelers. ■

Contact clevelandwheelers.com

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Asterton Bank

Asterton, Shropshire

Simon Warren

The Long Mynd, lying to the west of Church Stretton is a seven-mile long, three-mile wide plateau that features a handful of tough routes to the top, none more fearsome than Asterton Bank. Previously I have described it as a “joyless straight line of pain”.

Joyless that is, unless you relish the type of suffering experienced on two wheels whilst fighting the forces of gravity, in which case it's exactly what you're looking for.

Leave Asterton, pass the fading phone box and

see the road ramp left and disappear. As you reach this bend the slope kicks up to 20 per cent and it hardly eases to the top. The deteriorating sliver of tarmac clings perilously to the hillside with a high bank to the right and a vertical drop to the left. Cross your fingers you don't meet any traffic as this

will force you to dismount, and remounting on a 20 per cent slope is *never* easy. An end to the torment and a

return to a more civilised gradient arrives as the road bends right, with the finish hovering into view outside the Midland Gliding Club — enjoy!

CW
Difficulty
rating:
10/10

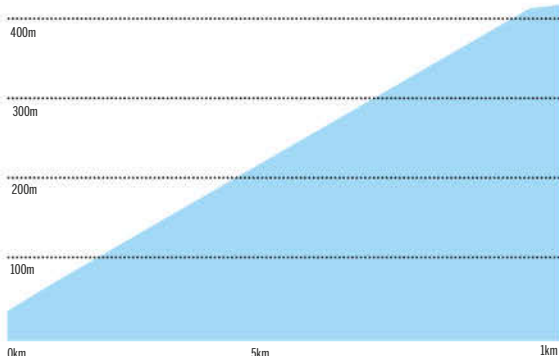
The stats

WHERE First find the village of Asterton on the western edge of the Long Mynd, then leave the village past the phone box, heading east.



KOM Top Tip Don't even think about it, trust me, you will regret it.

960m	418m	172m	17%	25%
Length	Summit height	Height gain	Average gradient	Max gradient

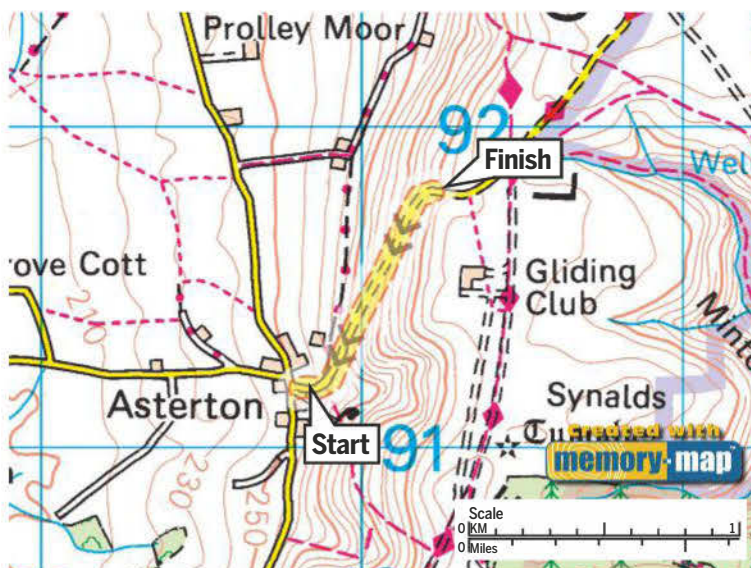


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Once you've started,
on no account stop

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Taylor and Simmonds win National 100 titles

Charles Taylor (South Pennine RC) and Hayley Simmonds (Team Velosport) were crowned national 100-mile time trial champions in Wales on Sunday.

Simmonds, who also won the British Time Trial Championship 10 days earlier, clocked 3:55.06 to win the 2015 title by almost 10 minutes from defending champion Bronwen Ewing (Trainsharp).

Meanwhile, Taylor successfully defended his 2014 crown with a time of 3:32.50, giving him victory by 15 seconds over Adam Topham (High Wycombe CC).

Team Swift won the men's team prize, while Ewing's Trainsharp outfit was the best female trio.

Elsewhere, the South Cave course in East Yorkshire was the platform for Drag2zero.com's Mark Jones to set the second fastest 10-mile time of the season as he stopped the clock at 18.24 to win the City Road Club Hull 10 on Sunday.

On the same course that saw Sir Bradley Wiggins set

the fastest time of the season back in May, Jones was two seconds quicker than second-placed Anthony Bromley of Barnsley RC, while Lutterworth Cycle Centre's Matt Sinclair was third in 18.28.

Matt Bottrill's irresistible form continued in the Belper BC 25 on Saturday, posting 46-38 to break Michael Hutchinson's event record.

The Drag2zero.com rider set the year's fastest 25 on the same course just two weeks ago and fell short of his own record by just eight seconds.

Richard Bideau, on the day before his 100-mile heroics (see page 18), finished 1.19 behind Bottrill to take second while Steve Irwin completed the podium, the North Lincs RC man finishing third with 48.28.

In road racing, Adam Duggleby (SportGrub Kuota) sprinted to victory in the Upton CC Summer Road Race in Pontefract, while in Scotland Spokes RT rider Fraser Martin won the Hugh Dornan Memorial at Garelochhead.

3. I. Cox (North Lincs RC)	3:34.39
4. E. Addis (Peebles CC)	3:37.44
5. J. Warrington (Tyneside Vagabonds CC)	3:40.32
6. D. Sleight (Clifton CC)	3:40.46
7. B. Fogarty (North Lincs RC)	3:42.04
8. P. Greenwood (Team Swift)	3:42.17
9. P. Fleming (Preston Wheelers)	3:42.48
10. I. Miller (Briggs & District CC)	3:44.08
Woman: Eleanor Haresign (Harrogate Nova CC)	3:59.16
Team: North Lincs RC (Steve Irwin, Ian Cox, Brian Fogarty)	10:42.02

St Austell Wheelers 50 (Victoria, Cornwall):

1. Conrad Moss (Mid Devon CC)	1:46.28
2. M. Slater (Exe Velo)	1:47.59
3. T. Chapman (Frome and Dist Wheelers)	1:48.13
4. T. McEvoy (Lanhydrock Wheelers)	1:50.20
5. G. Fouracres (St Austell Wheelers)	1:50.23
6. G. MacDougall (Tavistock Wheelers)	1:50.51
7. T. Gilbert (Penzance Wheelers)	1:51.21
8. N. French (St Austell Wheelers)	1:51.58
9. P. Friday (Cyclelogic)	1:52.15
10. P. Walshe (City Cycle Couriers)	1:52.26
Women: Heidi Thomas (Dales RT)	2:12.53
Veterans 40: Gavin McDougal	
Veterans 50: Gary Fouracres	
Veterans 60: Chris Scawn (Plymouth CC)	1:56.57

Liverpool Phoenix (Aintree) CC 25 (Melling Merseyside):

1. John Morgan (Preston Wheelers)	55.27
2. M. Nulty (Glossop Kinder Velo)	55.42
3. P. Ware (St Helens CRC)	57.07
4. M. Stell (Ribble Valley CRC)	57.28
5. K. Larmer (Port Sunlight Wheelers)	57.34
6. A. Hughes (North Cheshire Clarion)	57.50
7. P. Warburton (Liverpool Phoenix)	57.59
8. P. Shalliker (Coveryourcar.co.uk)	58.10
9. T. Workman (Lancashire RC)	58.41
10. P. Brooke (Wills Wheels CC)	58.59
Team: Liverpool Century RC (Colin Hayes 59.38, Peter Groom 1:00.01, Philip Elliott 1:01.55)	3:01.34
Woman: Rebecca Holland (Chester RC)	1:03.37
Veteran on standard: Phil Warburton	+10.53

City Road Club Hull 10 (South Cave, East Yorkshire):

1. Mark Jones (drag2zero.com)	18.24
2. A. Bromley (Barnsley RC)	18.26
3. M. Sinclair (Lutterworth Cycle Centre)	18.28
4. S. Surtees (Team Swift)	18.38
5. J. Weirs (Team Jewson)	18.40
6. S. Burns (Manchester Wheelers)	18.43
7. D. Maironis (Cover Your Car)	18.45
8. B. Harvey (Birdwell Wheelers)	18.47
9. D. Lazenby (Baines Racing)	18.54
10. D. Taylor (Bike Box Alan)	18.57
Women:	
1. Ingrid Shepherd (Sunderland Clarion)	20.51
2. J. Blackburn (Team Swift)	21.15
3. S. Semple (Stafford RC)	21.23

Deeside Thistle 10 (Drumochter, Scotland):

1. Jon Entwistle (Deeside Thistle CC)	20.45
2. K. Robertson (Granite City RT)	22.41
3. B. Duncan (Velocity 44 Stirling)	23.00
4. K. White (Deeside Thistle CC)	23.14
5. C. Duncan (Ythan CC)	23.16
6. G. Quinn (Deeside Thistle CC)	23.17
7. R. Brown (Aberdeen Wheelers CC)	23.19
8. J. Whyman (Aberdeen Wheelers CC)	23.27
9. I. Grant (Deeside Thistle CC)	23.46
10. M. Young (Deeside Thistle CC)	23.49
Woman: Carol Middleton (Ythan CC)	26.35

Saturday, July 4

Yorkshire Cycling Federation 50 (Thirsk, North Yorkshire):

1. Paul Thirling (Stockton Wheelers) ...	1:49.50
2. M. Flannery (Richmond tri-Kudu)	1:51.45
3. P. Turton (Yorkshire RC)	1:52.27
4. C. Riise (Shetland Wheelers)	1:55.12
5. B. Sunter (Condor RC)	1:57.21
6. C. Smith (Condor RC)	1:57.56
7. G. Ayres (VC Cumbria)	1:58.14
8. P. McGowan (Warrington RC)	1:58.38
9. C. Fenwick (Team Swift)	1:58.55
10. M. Willan (Clifton CC)	1:59.03
Woman: Kirsty Smith (Team Swift)	2:22.51

Belper BC 25 (Etwell, Derbyshire):

1. Matt Bottrill (drag2zero.com)	46.38
2. R. Bideau (Pendle Forest CC)	47.57
3. S. Irwin (North Lincs RC)	48.28
4. B. Harwood (Terry Wright Cycles RC)	49.01
5. P. Gamlin (Northover Vets Team)	49.04
6. R. Dean (Barnsley RC)	49.45
7. D. Bigham (Beeline Cycles RT)	49.47
8. K. Murray (Strategic Lions)	49.59
9. M. Arnold (CC Desiragear)	50.08
10. A. Bromley (Barnsley RC)	50.11

Coventry CC 25 (Princethorpe, Warwickshire):

1. Matt Clinton (Mike Vaughan Cycles)	50.36
2. J. Simpkins (drag2zero.com)	52.48
3. D. Kiernan (Lutterworth Cycle Centre RT)	53.07
4. A. Green (Lutterworth Cycle Centre RT)	54.43
5. R. Gibbons (Hinckley CRC)	55.01
6. R. Kenworthy (Leisure Lakes Bikes.com)	55.20
7. C. Twigg (Speedhub)	55.35
8. G. Platts (MG Décor)	55.37
9. J. Stone (Solihull CC)	55.52
10. K. Weatherall (Hinckley CRC)	55.53
Team: Hinckley CRC (Robert Gibbons, Karl Weatherall, David Mead 57.17)	2:48.18
Woman: Liz Powell (Mike Vaughan Cycles)	58.12
Junior: Ryan Kenworthy	

Witham Wheelers CC 25 (Silk Willoughby, Lincolnshire):

1. Neil Palmer (Spalding CC)	54.53
2. C. Ward (Spalding CC)	55.33
3. R. Hamblin (Sleaford Wheelers)	56.01
4. R. Egner (Witham Wheelers)	57.01
5. G. Symons (Witham Wheelers)	58.34
6. J. Pilgrim (Witham Wheelers)	59.47
7. J. Beere (Witham Wheelers)	1:00.25
8. J. Regler (Alford Wheelers)	1:00.35
9. M. Green (Bourne Wheelers)	1:00.47
10. P. Ripley (Alford Wheelers)	1:03.10
Junior: Reece Egner	
Juvenile: Adam Egner (Witham Wheelers)	1:04.41

Performance of the week

Richard Bideau (Pendle Forest CC) Stockton Wheelers 100, North Yorkshire

Making 100-mile debut, Bideau posted an impressive 3:18.54 and broke the 12-year-old competition record by almost four minutes.

Time trials

Sunday, July 5

National 100 Championship (Raglan, Wales):

1. Charles Taylor (South Pennine RC) ...	3:32.50
2. A. Topham (High Wycombe CC)	3:33.05
3. P. Gamlin (Northover VT)	3:38.41
=4. A. Jackson (Team Swift)	3:38.53
=4. S. Wilson (Team Polypipe)	3:38.53
6. J. Perkins (Team Zenith)	3:39.41
7. T. Pettinger (Sri Chinmoy)	3:39.50
8. D. Bloy (Team Velo Velocity)	3:41.25
9. B. Oliver (Nopinz)	3:41.39
10. J. Parker (PMR at Toachim House)	3:41.56
Team: Team Swift (Jackson, Simon Beldon 3:45.57, Joel Wainman 3:46.08)	11:10.58

Women:

1. Hayley Simmonds (Team Velosport)	3:55.06
2. B. Ewing (Team Trainsharp).....	4:04.49
3. J. Muller (Paceline RT)	4:06.48
4. C. Kunschke (High Wycombe CC)	4:10.04
5. C. Spearman (Nopinz)	4:11.47
6. V. Gill (Drag2zero.com)	4:11.54
7. K. Rietdorf (Team Milton Keynes)	4:20.13
8. K. Ledger (Langsett Cycles RT)	4:22.54
9. R. Mellor (Holmfirth CC)	4:24.38
10. H. Eborall (Born to Bike-Bridgton Cycles)	4:25.34
Team: Team Trainsharp (Ewing, Karina Bowie 4:28.21, Tina Reid 4:28.42)	13:01.52

Stockton Wheelers CC 100 (Kirkcalding, North Yorkshire):

1. Richard Bideau (Pendle Forest CC) ...	3:18.54 (comp record)
2. S. Irwin (North Lincs RC)	3:25.19

The year's fastest

10 MILES

	Rider	Time	Course	Date
1	Bradley Wiggins (Team Wiggins)	17.58	V718	16/05/15
2	M. Jones (drag2zero.com)	18.24	V718	30/05/15
3	A. Bromley (Barnsley RC)	18.26	V718	30/05/15
4	M. Sinclair (Lutterworth Cycle Centre)	18.28	V718	03/06/15
5	J. Surtees (Team Swift)	18.38	H10/17	30/05/15
6	A. Wareham (Team Swift)	18.39	V718	17/06/15
=7	M. Jones (drag2zero.com)	18.40	H10/8	17/06/15
=7	S. Irwin (North Lincs RC)	18.40	V718	11/04/15
=7	J. Weirs (Team Jewson)	18.40	V718	30/05/15
10	R. Bideau (Pendle Forest CC)	18.41	V718	03/06/15

25 MILES

	Rider	Time	Course	Date
1	Matt Bottrill (drag2zero.com)	46.30	A25/11	20/06/15
2	M. Bottrill (drag2zero.com)	46.38	A25/11	04/07/15
3	S. Irwin (North Lincs RC)	47.08	A25/11	20/06/15
4	A. Jackson (Team Swift)	47.16	A25/11	20/06/15
5	K. Davies (Team NBCC)	47.19	R25/3h	26/04/15
=6	M. Bottrill (drag2zero.com)	47.28	A25/11	11/04/15
=7	K. Davies (Team NBCC)	47.31	A25/11	09/05/15
=7	K. Davies (Team NBCC)	47.31	R25/7	10/05/15
9	R. Bideau (Pendle Forest CC)	47.48	A25/11	20/06/15
10	R. Bideau (Pendle Forest CC)	47.57	A25/11	04/07/15

50 MILES

	Rider	Time	Course	Date
1	Matt Bottrill (drag2zero.com)	1:35.54	A50/6	27/06/15
2	R. Bideau (Pendle Forest CC)	1:38.39	A50/6	27/06/15
3	S. Irwin (North Lincs RC)	1:38.49	A50/6	27/06/15
4	C. Taylor (South Pennine RC)	1:39.40	E2/50c	27/06/15
5	D. Green (Team Velocelocity.co.uk)	1:40.32	E2/50c	13/06/15
6	P. Lawrence (Team Swift)	1:40.33	E2/50c	13/06/15
7	M. Bottrill (drag2zero.com)	1:41.22	J4/16	13/06/15
8	D. Lazenby (Baines Racing)	1:42.00	E2/50c	13/06/15
9	A. Topham (High Wycombe CC)	1:42.18	H50/8	10/05/15
10	P. Gamlin (Northover VT)	1:42.35	A50/6	27/06/15

100 MILES

	Rider	Time	Course	Date
1	Richard Bideau (Pendle Forest CC)	3:18.54	T1002	05/07/15
2	S. Irwin (North Lincs RC)	3:25.19	T1002	05/07/15
3	C. Taylor (South Pennine RC)	3:32.50	R100/8a	05/07/15
4	A. Topham (High Wycombe CC)	3:33.05	R100/8a	05/07/15
5	A. Topham (High Wycombe CC)	3:34.01	H100/88	24/05/15
6	I. Cox (North Lincs RC)	3:34.39	T1002	05/07/15
7	E. Addis (Peebles CC)	3:37.44	T1002	05/07/15
8	P. Gamlin (Northover VT)	3:38.41	R100/8a	05/07/15
=9	A. Jackson (Team Swift)	3:38.53	R100/8a	05/07/15
=9	S. Wilson (Team Polypipe)	3:38.53	R100/8a	05/07/15

Mid Devon CC 10 (Newton Abbot, Devon):

1. Andrew Perkins (Mid Devon CC)	22.02
2. L. Bard (Exe Velo CC)	22.24
3. J. Kettle (Mid Devon CC)	22.31
4. D. Rouse (North Devon Wheelers)	23.12
5. J. Stewart (Revo Racing)	23.24
6. A. Foster (Mid Devon CC)	23.33
7. H. Loader (Mid Devon CC)	23.51
8. E. O'Connell (Essa CC)	24.16
9. J. Johnson (Mid Devon CC)	24.20
10. I. Cullen (Mid Devon CC)	24.24

South West DC GHS District Championship:

1. Evan Rouse (North Devon Wh)	23.36
2. G. Cox (RNRMC)	23.393
3. J. Plummer (Mid Devon CC)	24.21
=4. G. Kimber (CS Dynamo)	24.46
=4. A. Peters (Dales RT)	24.46
=4. J. Saunders (Mid Devon CC)	24.46
7. J. Cresswell (Mid Devon CC)	25.28
8. H. Wood (Mid Devon CC)	26.21

9. B Messenger (Exe Velo CC)	26.25
10. W. Thurgood (Mid Devon CC)	26.36

Friday, July 3

Team Swift 10 (Boghouses, Northumberland):

1. Danny Grieves (GS Metro)	19.57
2. C. Donaldson (GS Metro)	20.25
3. C. Isats (Berwick Wheelers)	20.41
4. P. Hall (Breeze Bikes RT)	20.42
5. B. Lane (GS Metro)	21.03
6. N. Martin (Adept Precision RT)	21.05
7. I. Taylor (CicloCostaBlanca.com)	21.12
8. S. Clark (GS Metro)	21.16
9. E. Gowland (Team Swift)	21.19
10. D. Robinson (Tyneside Vagabonds CC)	21.20

Wednesday, July 1

Team Swift 10 (South Cave, East Yorks):

1. Alastair Wareham (Team Swift)	18.39
2. M. Jones (drag2zero.com)	18.40

3. D. Barnett (drag2zero.com)	18.42
4. J. Wainman (Team Swift)	18.54
=5. S. Beldon (Team Swift)	19.12
=5. R. Dean (Barnsley RC)	19.12
7. R. Krygsman (Team Swift)	19.16
8. J. Wears (Team Jewson)	19.19
9. J. Surtees (Team Swift)	19.20
10. J. Brearley (City RC, Hull)	19.25
Woman: Louise Scupham (Scarborough Paragon)	22.32

Hill climb

Saturday, July 4

Birdwell Wheelers Open Hill Climb (Stainborough, South Yorkshire):

1. S. Dolby (Birdwell Wheelers)	1.05.1
2. A. Nichols (Langsett Cycles RT)	1.07.1
3. H. Cash (Holme Valley Wheelers)	1.10.0
4. I. Boyes (Team Cystic Fibrosis)	1.12.7
5. P. Mason (Birdwell Wheelers)	1.14.2
6. G. Bruff (Barnsley RC)	1.15.5
7. E. Verroken (Langsett Cycles RT)	1.21.1
8. K. Woodfindin (Dinnington Racing Club)	1.22.2
9. L. Booth (Geared Up Cycles)	1.25.6
10. A. Deck (Langsett Cycles RT)	1.25.6

Woman: Emilie Verroken

Junior: Henry Cash

Road racing

Sunday, July 5

Upton CC Summer Road Race (Pontefract, Yorkshire):

E, 1, 2, 3: 1. Adam Duggleby (SportsGrub Kuota) 75 miles in 2:51.00; 2. M. Kipling (MTS Cycle Sport); 3. B. Stokes (Achieve Northside Skinnergate); 4. J. Clark (Team Envelopemaster Bikeboxalan); 5. L. Baldwin (Champion System VCUK Racing); 6. B. Hetherington (Achieve Northside Skinnergate); 7. A. Hepworth (Team Envelopemaster Bikeboxalan); 8. J. Tanner (Team 3M); 9. P. Barusevicius (All Terrain Cycles); 10. S. Post (Wheelbase Altura).

Hugh Dorman Memorial Race to Roseneath (Garelochhead, Argyll & Bute):

E, 1, 2, 3: 1. Fraser Martin (Spokes RT) 75 miles 3:03.35; 2. J. Cowen (The Nab Racing); 3. H. Carrick (Project 51); 4. A. Feather (Bikeshed-Exeter Uni) all same time; 5. E. Oliphant (Team Raleigh-GAC) +0.03; 6. S. McCrossan (Paisley Velo RT) +0.05; 7. F. Young (Team Moda-Anon) +0.06; 8. A. Foster (Border City Wheelers); 9. J. Richards (Deeside Thistle CC); 10. S. Noon (Spokes RT) all same time.

Sotonia Summer Road Race (Owslebury, Winchester):

2, 3, 4: 1. Ben Marks (Cycleworks.co.uk) 60 miles in 2:08.00; 2. J. Boyman (Farnham RC) +0.02; 3. P. Peters (Danny Shane Storck Racing) +0.06; 4. A. Pickett (Eden Veranda Racing); 5. P. Double (VC Venta); 6. L. Walsh (VC St Raphael); 7. M. Downie (DHC Racing); 8. K. Jasper (unattached); 9. D. Billings (VC St Raphael); 10. G. Stanton-Ellis (Team Moore Fitness RC).

Saturday, July 4

Stafford Kermesse (Shugborough, Staffordshire):

E, 1, 2: 1. Gabriel Cullaigh (100% ME) 65 miles in 1:42.51; 2. M. Kneisky (Raleigh GAC) +0.01; 3. J. Mould (One Pro Cycling); 4. S. Lampier (Raleigh GAC); 5. S. Lowe (Raleigh GAC); 6. D. McGowan



Simmonds: women's national TT champ

(Pedal Heaven RT); 7. M. Cronshaw (Madison-Genesis); 8. D. Appleby (NFTO); 9. L. Stones (Raleigh-GAC); 10. E. Oliphant (Raleigh-GAC) all same time.

Francesco Group Women's Grand Prix (Shugborough, Staffordshire):

E, 1, 2, 3: 1. Nicola Juniper (Team Giordana - Triton) 56.32; 2. C. Joiner (Team WNT) +0.08; 3. B. Tate (Team WNT) +2.05; 4. A. Park (Team Giordana -Triton) +2.08; 5. H. Colborne (Team Jadan); 6. A. Parkinson (Team Giordana-Triton) all same time; 7. L. Shaw (Matrix Fitness Development); 8. R. Osborne (Team WNT); 9. S. Clayton (Stafford Road Club); 10. H. Walker (Team WNT) all +1 lap.

Cottingham Day Criterium

(Cottingham, East Riding of Yorkshire):

1, 2, 3: 1. Paul Rymer (Wilson's Wheels); 2. D. Posnett (Hull Thursday RC); 3. A. Turner (Andy Moore Autocentre); 4. J. White (G4 Acre RT); 5. J. Gromett (Squadra RT); 6. A. Bishop (Andy Moore Autocentre); 7. R. Moore (Squadra RT); 8. M. Moss (Clifton CC); 9. R. Baldwin (Cottingham Coureurs); 10. J. Harvey (Dinnington RC).

Friday, July 3

Stafford Grand Prix

(Elite Circuit Series, round 2):

E, 1, 2: 1. Jon Mould (One Pro Cycling); 2. A. Blythe (Oric-GreenEdge) +0.17; 3. M. Kneisky (Raleigh-GAC); 4. J. McEvoy (NFTO); 5. A. Tennant (Team Wiggins); 6. H. Tanfield (JLT-Condor); 7. E. Oliphant (Raleigh-GAC); 8. D. McGowan (Pedal Heaven RT); 9. G. Atkins (One Pro Cycling); 10. D. Appleby (NFTO) all same time.

Wednesday, July 1

Otley Grand Prix (Otley, West Yorks):

Men E, 1, 2 (Elite Circuit Series, round 1): 1. Daniel McLay (Bretagne S  ch   Environnement); 2. C. Latham (100 Per Cent ME); 3. J. Mould (One Pro Cycling); 4. M. Kneisky (Raleigh-GAC); 5. S. Thwaites (Bora-Argon 18); 6. D. McGowan (Pedal Heaven RT); 7. F. English (JLT-Condor); 8. G. Atkins (One Pro Cycling); 9. D. Appleby (NFTO); 10. L. Stones (Raleigh-GAC).
Women E, 1, 2, 3 (Women's Road Series round 5): 1. Annasley Park (Giordana Triton); 2. S. Storey (Pearl Izumi-Sports Tours International); 3. N. Juniper (Giordana-Triton); 4. R. Nixon (Fusion RT); 5. A. Parkinson (Giordana-Triton); 6. B. Tate (Team WNT); 7. A. Mellor (Paul Milnes RT); 8. E. Harris (Army CUJ); 9. B. Hayward (Pearl Izumi-Sports Tours International); 10. E. Stedman (Univ of Sheffield CC).

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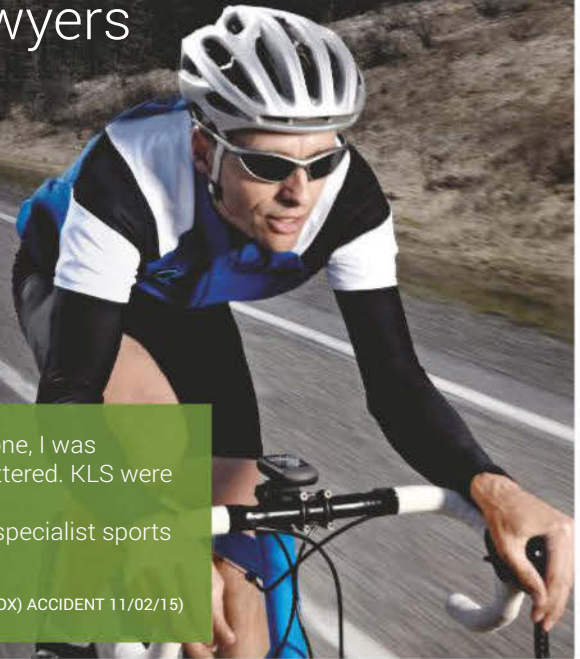
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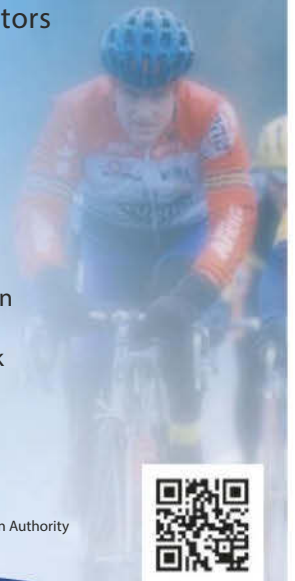
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Dr Hutch

The Doc laments his audacious attempts to fix his own bike — and a poor clothing choice

doctorhutch_cycling@timeinc.com



There's no way to finesse the following two statements, so I'll get straight on with them. One: I own a pair of white linen trousers. Two: I sometimes wear them in contexts outside that of my celebrated John Travolta impersonation.

Last week I wore them because it was very hot, and I had to go to a meeting with people whom I was confident wouldn't snigger at them, on the grounds that they were grown-ups, who were not cyclists.

When I got home, I decided a ride was in order. But then I remembered that the last time I'd ridden my training bike, it had been making a creaking noise that I didn't care for. I spun the cranks a few times, and realised the

cassette was loose. Then I realised the whole freehub was loose. Then I realised that if the wheel was spun a bit faster, the bearings made a noise like a washing machine full of gravel.

I decided a full service was in order. The kind where you line up your Allen keys in an act of fastidious, almost surgeon-like preparation. I already had greasy hands by the time I remembered my inappropriate trousers, and by that point I couldn't even take them off without having to clean my hands, an act that in itself would be fraught with hazard. So I pressed impetuously onwards. And a full service — new bearings, new freehub, fresh grease, a cleaned cassette and a new chain — was all accomplished without a spot on my trousers.

For Little God's sake

Then I sat down on the manky old freehub, which was sitting on a chair, where only a moron or a malevolent spirit could possibly have placed it.

It was, of course, the latter. Because this sort of thing is the work of the Little God of Local Bike Shops. The Little God makes it his business to punish us for any attempt to deprive the local bike shop of income.

Those little tabs on a rear mech that serve no apparent purpose, but which you can so easily forget to route a new chain through? The Little God invented those. The way an Allen key will develop a paintwork-scraping mind of its own when allowed near a new bike? The Little God was



there. The squeaking noise from any set of home-adjusted brake blocks? The Little God, playing a triumphant trumpet.

The Little God was there when I tried to undo a stuck chainring bolt last year. I have a tool for the back of a chainring bolt — but a deeply inadequate one. I cursed it over and over again before casting it aside with a cry of rage. Finally, humbly, to the shop I went, scratches all over the chainset telling a tale of serial failure.

"Hold on, I've got a special tool," said the mechanic. He produced exactly the same variety of pig

Acts of Cycling Stupidity

There is a story about a woman who took her damaged bike to the shop of a well-known retired Scottish international bike rider. The frame had been damaged in one of those mysterious 'just riding along' incidents that mechanics hear about so often, and which usually involve someone reversing a car over it.

"I have a special and expensive tool for just this problem," said our hero. "But it makes a very loud noise, so I'll have to ask you to go for a walk round the block while I use it. Health and safety, you understand."

The woman went for a walk, while the shop owner produced a £10 lump hammer and walloped the frame straight again.



The lump hammer: a mechanic's best friend

GREAT INVENTIONS OF CYCLING

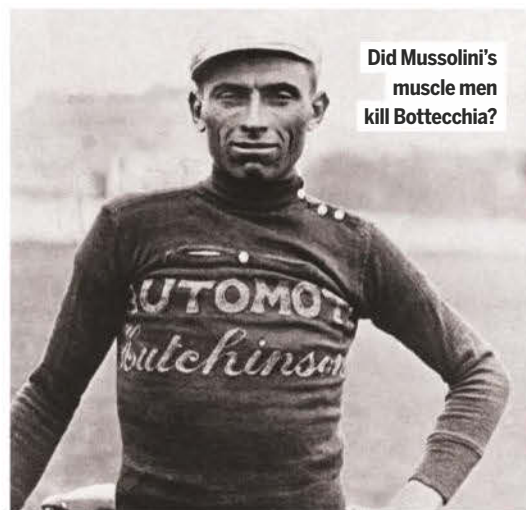
Ottavio Bottecchia 1894-1927

Ottavio Bottecchia was the first Italian to win the Tour de France, in 1924, and the first man to lead the race from start to finish. His talent for cycling first became apparent during World War One, when he was an infantry cyclist in the Italian army and an officer noticed him rocketing up a hill with a heavy gun on his back.

He was signed by the French Automoto team, despite his grasp of the French language being limited to the single multi-purpose phrase: "No bananas, lots of coffee, thank you." His 1924 win was aided by three-minute time bonuses for each of the four stages he won — although even without them he'd have won by over 20 minutes.

He was never very popular, however. He was a socialist at a point when Italy was in love with fascism, and was rather fonder of delivering socialist lectures than anyone was of listening to them. Indeed he was so unpopular in Italy that when the Tour passed through the country in 1924, he replaced his very recognisable yellow jersey with something a bit less likely to get him beaten up.

He won again in 1925 and died in mysterious circumstances in 1927, shortly after Mussolini came to power in Italy. He was found lying in a field with a fractured skull, broken collarbone, and various other injuries, some distance from his undamaged bike. There was much speculation that it was the work of fascists.



Did Mussolini's
muscle men
kill Bottecchia?

Photo: STAFF/AFP/Getty Images



"Squeaking brakes? The Little God playing a trumpet"

iron spanner I'd just flung across the garage. He undid the chainring bolt with it. "Don't worry about it," he said, waving away a tenner clasped in a hand that shook with fury. "Not going to take money for a simple job like that."

But perhaps the Little God's finest hour was when I got a

puncture right outside the local shop and had the effrontery to set about fixing the puncture on the pavement outside. I swear the tyre contracted. It was unremovable. I broke two tyre levers and three fingernails, scraped the rim on the kerbstone, and finally used the tyre to catapult the final lever against the shop window, with a loud bang.

The owner looked out at me in a kindly manner. So I did the only dignified thing I could. I rode home grumpily on the rim, the Little God knocking stones into my path the whole way.



The 'roof of the Tour de France' first featured in 1962

Cime de la Bonette

Chris Sidwells looks at the Tour de France's highest ever climb

The Cime de la Bonette is a mountaintop at a grand height, even for the Alps. It is more Himalayan than Alpine, and it's crossed at 2,802m (9,193 feet) by the highest road in France. Signs at the bottom warn travellers they are entering wild country, and as few people live on this remote mountain, climbing it feels like a real adventure.

The Cime became part of the Tour de France in 1962, shortly after the road across the summit was built and for all its natural splendour there is something artificial about it.

For centuries, travellers passed beneath the Cime de la Bonette using the Col de la Bonette to get between the Tinée and Ubaye valleys. But at 2,715m, the Col de la Bonette was 49m lower than the Col de l'Iseran in the northern Alps, which was the highest road in France. This offended local pride and in the end the spirit of one-upmanship won the day.

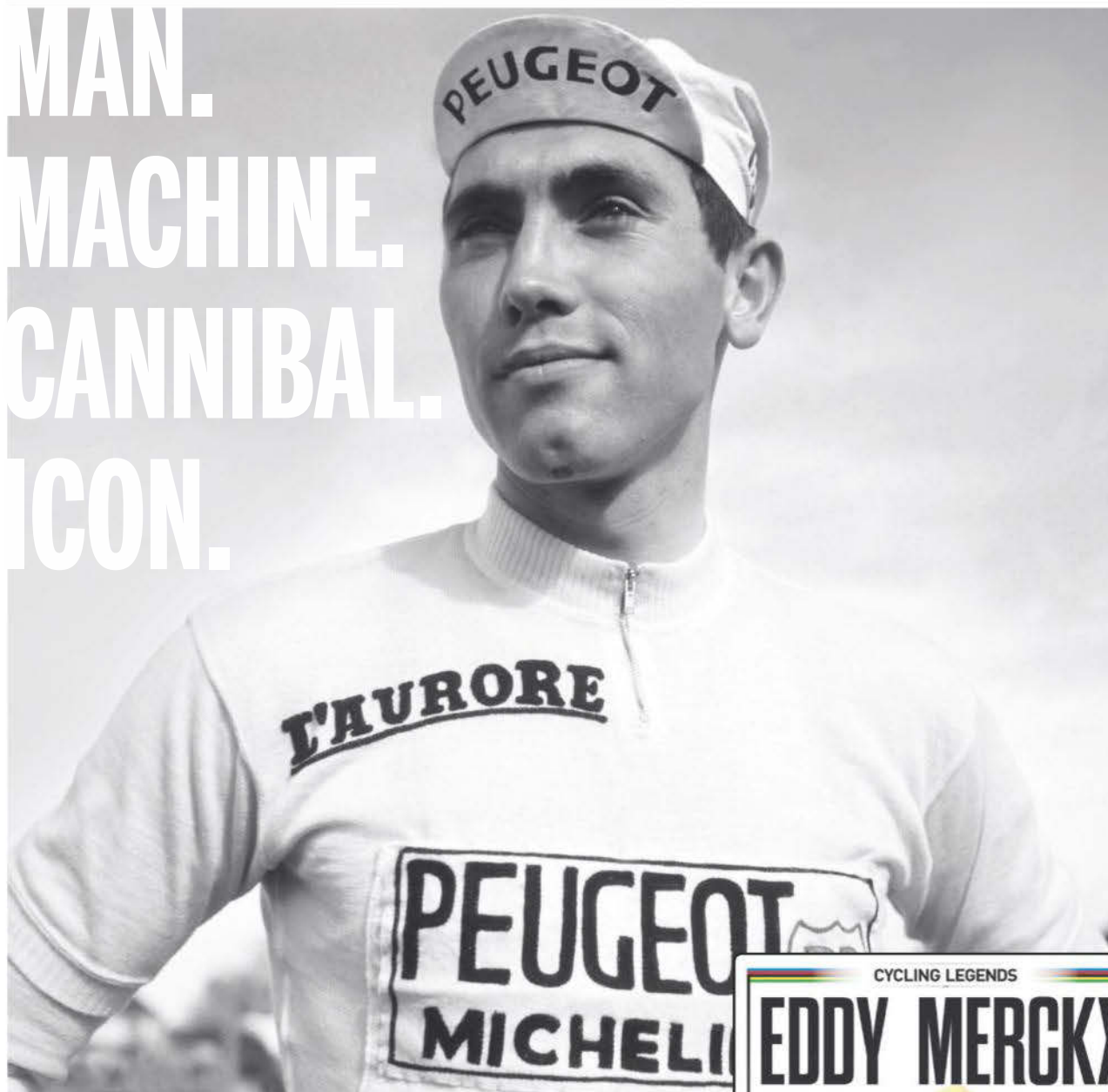
The locals persuaded the authorities to build a new, higher road that loops from the Col de la Bonette up and around the peak, the Cime, to within 60 metres of its summit, then descends to join the col again. There is no other purpose to the new road other than to be the highest in France — and because the Tour de France pursued a faster, harder, higher policy, the race had to use it.

The Eagle of Toledo, Federico Bahamontes, was the first rider to reach the 'roof of the Tour de France' — as a journalist called it in 1962. He repeated the feat in 1964. Tom Simpson was third man over in 1962, and a British rider featured again in 1993 when Robert Millar was first to the top.

The climb has been used only four times by the Tour, the last time in 2008 when John-Lee Augustyn of South Africa flew over it then crashed spectacularly off-road on the other side, killing his advantage in what was a thrilling stage.

The Cime de la Bonette has always been thrilling, though. How can a 25km climb gaining over a mile in height, set in the beautiful Mercatour Park of the southern Alps, be anything less than spectacular?

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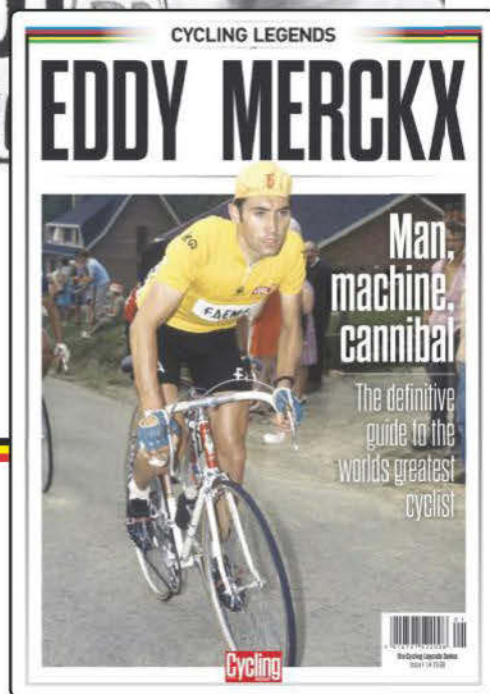
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